

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Volume One
ON FAITH
A Commentary on St. Thomas'
Theological Summa
I^aII^{ae}, qq. 62, 65, 68:
II^aII^{ae}, qq. 1-16

By Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P.

TRANSLATED BY
Thomas a Kempis Reilly, O. P.



B. HERDER BOOK CO., ST. LOUIS & LONDON

This book is a translation of
De Virtutibus Theologicis, by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.,
published by Roberto Berruti & Co., Torino, Italy.

IMPRIMI POTEST
Gilbert J. Graham, O.P., Provincial

IMPRIMATUR
✠ Joseph Cardinal Ritter
Archbishop of St. Louis

September 4, 1964

© 1965 by B. Herder Book Co.
314 North Jefferson, St. Louis, Missouri 63103
London: 2/3 Doughty Mews, W.C. 1
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64-8560
Printed in the United States of America
by Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton, New York
Designed by Klaus Gemming

TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
Mother of Grace
Who
Has Taught the Mysteries of Our Salvation
To Her Son's Little Ones,
Sweetly and With Profundity
The Author
As a Token of Gratitude
And of Filial Obedience
Dedicates This Volume

PREFACE

FOUR EDITIONS of the author's previous work, *De Revelatione*, on "Revelation as proposed by the Catholic Church," serve as an important milestone in fundamental apologetics. The volume now presented is to acquaint religious-minded readers with the manner of spiritual life demanded by the mysteries revealed. It must be a life of Christian faith, hope, and charity, kept ardent and unctuous by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The translator here introduces the author, who prefaces his Latin original with the following general survey.

Our chief design is to throw light on the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, regarding virtues as considered in general and also one by one. The light is conveyed in the form of a principle which is correctly worded this way: *Human faculties, habits, and acts derive their specific character from their formal objects*. The formal object is the fixed norm for virtues, whether acquired or infused, and also for the seven gifts of God's Holy Spirit. The more a formal object motivates the subordinate, secondary, and contingent factors of human performance from ever higher levels, the more are virtuous habits bound to improve. The betterment affects the innermost nature of the virtues themselves, their excellence, properties, and subordination, and their increase through purifications that chasten and deliver them completely from every admixture and marring alloy.

It is imperative that the principle laid down be thoroughly understood. Not rarely, beginners familiarize themselves with its wording as a formula framed to be remembered. The content shrinks in their minds to the thinness of a nominalistic shell. Gradually they perceive it has put them in possession of a concept. The shell begins to smack of a new potency. Not conviction, but admiration has been enlivened. The conceptualistic leaning gives vent to smarter expression. The formula is passed upon as at least an ingenious hypothesis. Deeper thinking eventually brings the student to face the law of reality.

The principle wrapped up in the formula is what counts. It accentuates the true nature of any and every virtue—acquired or infused, moral or theological. It shows the kind of increase that virtues ought

to develop or receive through merit, prayer, the sacraments—especially the Holy Eucharist—and the interior purifications of sense and spirit.

In grasping the truth that human faculties, habits, and acts have their species determined by their formal object, one must expel the latent virus of shallow nominalism and conceptualism. One must awaken to the realism of intelligence. One must pierce through the facts of experience, and by penetrating them, discern beneath them the nature of things. Within our chosen horizon we propose to study the nature of infused virtues and the theological virtues in particular.

An inferior habit can never attain to the formal object of a superior habit. Mathematics, for example, having quantity as its peculiar object, can never touch the subject of *being* or *ens* which is the formal object of metaphysics. And yet, every quantity is an *ens*. It is entirely penetrated and circumscribed by *being*. Outside *ens* or *being* it can never escape.

Of two men who listen attentively to the same symphony of Beethoven, one who is utterly devoid of musical instinct misses entirely the pulsing spirit of the composition. The other, a skilled expert in musical appreciation, is mastered by it and subdued.

Reprobate demons may be compared to the toneproof listener: they have lost infused faith. They abide, however, by an acquired faith which cannot rise to the perception of the characteristic object and formal motive of infused faith. They behold the Gospel working out. They do not, because they cannot, give internal assent to the truth of God's word as issuing from the free "Author of grace." Among men, as among demons, if acquired faith could surmount this impossibility, infused faith would not be necessary. There would be in it no utility beyond facilitating the act of believing. Pelagians would then be flattered in their error, which was long ago condemned.

"Since the fifth century, Pelagians and their imitators hold that the rational study of the gospel, together with the miracles and other signs that make it credible, furnish a sufficient basis for believing.* People who are our contemporaries have thought the same about so-called "evidences" of Christianity. With the equipment described, any man of "natural good will" can get along safely, without the need of an interior grace of faith.

If the position were tenable, then St. Paul was mistaken when he wrote: "[Faith] is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Belief would no longer be essentially supernatural. It would not be *per se* infused, but

only *per accidens*. It would be as sterile a thing as infused geometry.

Besides, if the formal object of faith were attainable without faith, then the formal object of hope and charity might be attained without either hope or charity. In the premises all three theological virtues would be infused for no better purpose than to increase ease in exercising them, on the part of their recipients.

The First Vatican Council nullifies the validity of this mental meandering, by laying down definitely that all the faithful are bound to believe supernaturally and infallibly the mysteries of revelation, because, and only because, they are backed up by the *authority of God who reveals them* (cf. Denz. n. 1789).

Let any other base be substituted for the personal authority of God revealing, then faith forfeits its infallible character and certitude. It dwindles into a diaphanous hypothesis, conditioned by a possibility. The Incarnation and all mysteries inaugurated by it would be reputed as a deposit of divine faith, only in case it were proved that God actually did reveal them.

This introductory survey summarizes the entire treatise on the theological virtues. But the panorama must be scanned from a mountain peak. Only from an eminence can travelers be directed safely in picking or finding out the surer and more direct paths leading to the summit.

There have been authors who assimilated many recent and earlier investigations about faith, without any clear insight into the profound import attaching to the principle so often cited by St. Thomas.

Time and again the axial principle controlling the specification of habits, and therefore virtues, by their formal object, recurs as a leitmotif in the theological melody of St. Thomas' articles. It cannot help being the leitmotif of this commentary that is resonant with their echoes.

Critics will counter: "Cut out so many repetitions." We judge it befitting, however, to leave them. There is too much advantage in the policy of welcoming continuous guidance from a fixed and eminent principle to which one makes frequent returns. Pyramid climbers admit it, once they reach the conspicuous apex which fascinated them from so many angles on the way up; and from which, now, they survey all flanks of the whole pyramid below them.

In circles and spheres, all radii measure outwards from an indivisible center. The simplicity of the circle is a lasting challenge to the

complexity of the polygons within its circumference. There is always room for one side more in the polygons; yet their rigid angular peripheries will never coincide with the circle's circumference, no matter how close they may get to it. The circumference is steadied by a centripetal force holding it at every point.

In the spiritual order the superior simplicity of infused supernatural faith, hope, and charity is a perfection of eminence. The whole of sacred theology grows radiant because of it. But then, theology is compelled to treat aright the innermost nature and increase maturing in all infused virtues, particularly in the theological virtues. None but God can give them to us and make them what they are. None but they can lead us to God. One of the three, indeed, will last forever, charity.

God grant that we may live by these virtues more and more.

INTRODUCTION

Virtues in General

THREE CONSIDERATIONS are in order here: (1) the definition of virtue; (2) the division of virtues; and (3) specification of the virtues.

1. *The Definition of Virtue*

The name virtue is derived from the Latin word *vir*, which means 'man.' Virtue makes man's spirit strong. It builds up morale in the sense of spiritual manhood.

Moral character has been described as the impress of *vir*, the man, on *humus*, the clay, of which *homo* is composed. *Homo* designates the human being as such, irrespective of male or female.¹

Thus it comes about that mercy, as a virtue, with its roots in the will, is quite different from the sense experience of pity. Pity is an inclination, praiseworthy though it be, rooted in the superficial ground of feeling. Similarly, chastity as an absolute virtue stands apart from mere modesty, its protective accompaniment.

Sometimes virtue is taken to signify a potency of the soul, but we mean by it something more special. *Virtue is an accessory quality which enables man to use any potency or faculty belonging to him correctly, with ease, promptness, and pleasure.*

In common usage virtue is the opposite of vice. Prudence is the reverse of imprudence. It is not a refinement of craftiness. Fortitude lies in-between opposite vices; namely, rash daring in one direction and cowardice in another.

Little by little we progress from a confused to a distinct concept of virtue.

St. Augustine's definition of virtue is based on its contrast with vice. He says: "Virtue is a quality of the mind improving it through a goodness that makes for right living. Virtue cannot be put to evil uses." He is speaking of virtue that is infused and cannot be acquired by mere

¹ Explanation of A. Gardeil.

human effort. "God produces it in us, without our having anything positive to contribute to it."

Many passages in St. Augustine converge in this focus.² It is because the good quality of the mind, by which virtuous living is secured, measures up to right reason and divine law, that nobody can apply it to evil uses.

Granted that virtue is operative as a principle of action, and that the self-conscious man is proud of it, his complacency, instead of resulting from the virtue, has a different cause and is turning upon virtue as an extrinsic object rather than an inherent factor.

Take prudence as an illustration. If it is genuine, nobody can employ it directly as an active instrument of evil. Whenever a prudent man, so esteemed, chances to act imprudently, what he does proceeds not from his known habit of virtue, but from its opposite. Imprudence, if habitual, becomes a vice incompatible with habitual prudence.

Employing the philosophical terminology of Aristotle, St. Thomas defines: "Virtue is an operative habit that is good. It makes its possessor good as well as the deed he performs." Intellectual virtues, like science and art, are not virtues in the strict sense. They fail to make one morally good. Virtue affects one as a whole, as an integral personal unit. In a partial degree, intellectual virtues may develop good health in a man, or turn him into a good artist, or refine his skill as a good mechanic. In spite of all this, the man may persist as a well-known pervert. It is quite the contrary with virtues simply and properly so styled. Prudence and justice, for example, make the man simply good. Rectitude, which they require in the will, rounds out the goodness of the whole person. Education of the understanding, in truth, falls short. It may be highly warping through limitation or specialization. It reaches one or another faculty and may cultivate a variety of skills—it smartens—but benefits of this kind need have no proportionate effect on moral goodness begotten of virtuous habits.³ A good, prudent man, for that reason, designates comprehensively a character that is dominated by good will; not so, the reputation of being a good artist. Skill in intellectual pursuits does not even postulate virtue as a necessity.

Offsetting virtue, vice is defined as an "operative habit that is bad." Cunning and refractory smartness act that way. They are bad.

² Cf. in particular *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, chaps. 18, and 19.

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 56, a. 3; q. 55, aa. 1-4; q. 57, a. 1; q. 58, a. 2.

An operative habit is distinct in kind from a fluttering disposition or caprice. It has a sturdiness hard to alter. It impels its subject to use his own power and use it well, if he is virtuous, or ill, if he inclines toward vice.

St. Thomas observes that a habit is properly so called when, by its very nature, it depends on principles that are hard to budge. Mere dispositions rest on principles that are easy to change. There is an essential difference between the two.

Science or knowledge, together with virtues, accurately so styled, are habits. An opinion is only a disposition.⁴ Nevertheless, in its beginnings a habit, in the course of being acquired, ranks rather as a disposition, owing to the fluidness of the subject (or tyro), who may easily change.

The very opposite may occur in the matter of opinion. So long as one opines, the mental attitude is holding some object in abeyance. It can turn out, however, that a fascinating object is clung to steadfastly by an unyielding subject. This is what happens when heresy is embraced by a fanatic. Heretical opinions have not generated conviction. Being unstable as opinions, they have been violently supplanted by the invasion of an alien disposition, a substitute, which goads their upholder by blind instinct.⁵

Habit is accountable for the order and arrangement governing the faculties of the rational soul and their tendencies in numerous directions. Let the arrangement be suitable, the habit is one of virtue. Let the arrangement be incompatible with right reason, the habit is a vice. Virtue indicates the perfection of the faculty. It is called "the ultimate" of the faculty which it perfects.

St. Thomas shows that virtue can be anchored in reason, like prudence, for the right direction of human acts; in the will, like justice, which is bent on giving everybody his due; or in the sensitive appetite, like fortitude and temperance, which regulate personal comportment.⁶

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 49, a. 2 ad 3.

⁵ The last three paragraphs have been incorporated into the text from a lengthy footnote by the author. The last two sentences are by the the translator.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 56.

2. Division of the Virtues

here interested in science and art. The theological division in point

Restricting attention to virtues rigorously so named, we are not is between virtues that are naturally acquired and virtues that are divinely infused.

Acquired Virtues. St. Thomas asks whether any habit can grow out of acts as its cause.⁷ Guided by experience he answers the same as Aristotle: Yes, habits are caused by acts, both habits of virtue and habits of vice. After this statement he offers a profound explanation.

"A particular agent need not embody more than the active principle of its own performance. Such is fire, burning sheerly through the solitary principle of its heating power." No special habit can develop from burning, which is the act peculiar to fire. The same holds true of other agencies in nature: water, air, gold. It is impossible for them to change their individual functioning into something else that is brand new, or even quit the effects they have always been producing. [Water does not burn. Gold does not wet.]⁸

It is otherwise when an agent contains a double principle, a principle or combination of principles at once active and passive, issuing forth in what it does. That is what occurs in human acts. This is the reason. When an appetitive virtue is put into action, the things it effects proceed from appetitive power, which is set astir by the representation of the appetizing object on the part of an apprehending power. Furthermore, there is an understanding power which, under the government of reason, supervises conclusions drawn or carried out in action. This perceptive faculty is impelled in its starting by an activating principle in the form of a proposition manifesting a self-evident truth.

From acts of this nature certain habits result in human agencies, as effects from a cause. When any unit suffers or is moved by another, there ensues in it a disposition traceable to the transitive action of the agent. Out of such a disposition, moral virtues develop into habits. They are caused by reason, after being fashioned in an in-

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, q. 51, a. 2.

⁸ Aristotle. II *Ethic. princ.*; brackets by translator.

tellect motivated, as it were, scientifically, by the force of first principles.⁹

By this process there is an engendering of the virtues classified as acquired. These are virtues whose active or generative principle is part of ourselves. It is not so with infused virtues. Infused faith, for instance, is a "gift of God." Infused charity is literally "poured forth into our hearts" by God's Holy Spirit.¹⁰ Infused virtues, therefore, are those whose active principles are not of us; they come from above.

Infused virtues are the class to which the theological virtues belong. They are essentially ordained to an object and purpose of the supernatural order. Therefore they cannot be produced in us by any but a supernatural agent. Since order among agencies has to be up to the level required by the ends attained, it follows that God is the necessary and only sufficient agency for the infusion of theological virtues.¹¹

Ancient philosophers, particularly Aristotle, discovered an acceptable division of acquired virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance (with others annexed).

St. Thomas shows great excellence in grading them.¹² Prudence he ranks as the most noble, owing to its radical closeness to reason. Next comes justice, grounded in the will. The third and fourth places are held by fortitude and temperance respectively. Fortitude stands prior to temperance since it is more obviously rational in its determinateness. Fortitude and temperance both have to do with the sensitive appetite. Fortitude dominates, controls, and perfects it in matters relating immediately to life and death. Temperance regulates it in the intermediate matters of physical nourishment and venery.

Infused Virtues. The higher order of infused virtues over acquired ones gained the fixed standing of a dogma of faith when the Council of Trent defined that the three theological virtues are *per se* infused and are a gift of God (cf. Denz. 800). Moreover, against Scotus it is the common doctrine of theologians that, over and above the acquired moral virtues described by Aristotle, there is another set of moral virtues *per se* infused; only these latter, as St. Thomas shows,

⁹ Cf. also *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 2.

¹⁰ Cf. Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:5.

¹¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 51, a. 4; q. 62, a. 1; q. 63, a. 3.

¹² Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 66, aa. 3-4.

are of the specifically Christian type.¹³ The matter will be taken up again.

Theological virtues are concerned with man's last supernatural end. Infused moral virtues deal with the supernatural means to be employed in pursuit of that end. Moral virtues that are acquired affect the use of means supplied in the order of nature, means that are naturally accessible without grace. They are subservient to infused moral virtues in somewhat the same way as the nimble fingers of a musician are to the talent of art that is stored in his practical intellect.

We need not say more for the present about the classification of virtues as acquired and infused. But among infused habits we must add the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.¹⁴ Aquinas expounds their purpose. They dispose the soul of the just man to carry out promptly and easily the special inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

3. Specification of the Virtues

Human habits and human acts are both specified by their formal objects. This principle sheds light throughout the entire treatment of acquired and infused virtues. What is its true sense? We are indebted to St. Thomas for the key which he furnishes when answering the inquiry: "Whether habits should be distinguished according to their objects."¹⁵

The Angelic Doctor expresses and proves his own affirmative stand. First he outlines it in a *sed contra* argument.

Habits are certain predispositions to acting. There can be no doubt that acts differ specifically according to the diversity of their objects. Sight, for instance, discerns colored objects; hearing discerns sound; understanding discerns truth; and will power is stirred by goodness. Acts of temperance regulate a just man's observance in the use of food, drink, and sex. What is true of individual acts holds true equally of the corresponding habits. Both alike are accordingly specified by their object.

St. Thomas builds up proof by analyzing a threefold relationship affecting habits. There are mutual bearings between habits and

¹³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, q. 63, a. 3, 4.

¹⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, q. 68.

¹⁵ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2.

(1) their own inherent active principles; (2) the nature of the subject in which they are rooted; and (3) their proper objects. Important conclusions follow.

1. A habit, being a definite form received into the human agent, carries with it a specification characterized in advance by the active principles that produce it. On every effect there is an impress likening it to its cause—granting, of course, that there has been no external interference disturbing the peculiar determinateness of the cause.

For that reason infused habits are a participation in God's own intimate life, since it is God who produces them. Similarly, moral habits that men acquire are of a kind that is decided by the special directive or reasoning act which engenders them.

2. Real habits are related to some particular nature which they match or fail to match. This sets them apart, with a specification issuing from the nature matched or unmatched. Infused habits, therefore, should be classified as divine, owing to their sharing in a nature that is divine. But habits acquired in bare accordance with human nature rank as suitable when they are a good match, like the virtues, or unsuitable when they are a bad match, like the vices.

3. Operative habits receive a specific classification in virtue of their operation. The classification gets diversified when the objects of the operation branch out into a variety of subordinate species. Hence habits are supernaturally operative, because the object of their operation is essentially supernatural. Acquired habits, on the other hand, cannot emerge by their own operation above the natural level of the only objects they can reach.

We are here dealing with formal, not material objects. In the art of medicine, for instance, specialists deal objectively with material things that are contrary, namely, health and sickness. The specification of medicine as a single consistent art comes from the singleness of the formal object encompassing all material ones. The physician envisions sickness as a privation of health. His operation impels him toward the restoration of health as his formal object, through loyalty to his profession.

Similarly, the moral virtue of temperance functions aloof from the vices of intemperance, by focusing on the right regulation of the sensitive appetite as its formal object.

Certain theologians, following the ways of thought preferred in

Scotism, nominalism, and Molinism, take a faulty meaning out of the article we have presented according to St. Thomas.

An infused virtue like faith is quite different from the habit of faith acquired by demons. It has to be different, because the two forms of faith proceed from diverse active principles. And yet, they say, both forms of faith attain to the same formal object. If that were true, then the formal object of infused faith would be within the reach of demons, solely in virtue of their naturally acquired faith. That this was the stand of Scotus and Molina we shall explain later.¹⁶

Thomists and Suárez have always rejected the interpretation just given. It wrecks the essential supernatural character of the theological virtues and clears the way for a return to semi-Pelagianism. If the formal object *quo* and *quod* of infused faith becomes attainable without the infusion of faith, it follows that the infusion is needless. It would have no advantage beyond making the act of believing easier. Pelagius liked to talk that way. Then, too, the beginning of faith and salvation would become possible for human nature without the help of grace. Semi-Pelagianism originated this false claim.

Once the formal object of Christian faith becomes accessible to the natural powers of human intelligence by the application of merely natural good will, it is hard to see why Christian faith should pass any longer as an exclusive "gift of God." This is the delusion, however, of those who make the reading of the Gospel sufficient for the purpose, because of its confirmation by miracles and other signs. St. Paul is emphatic. He proclaims Christian faith to be a "gift of God." Until the gift is infused, it cannot be possessed.¹⁷

If acquired faith, fostered by natural good will, could attain to formal belief in revealed mysteries, how could it be any longer insisted upon that infused faith is necessary for salvation? A faith that would be specified only as "infused *per accidens*" would be like infused geometry. Its object would be wholly within the reach of natural knowledge. (There is no such faith for genuine Christians.)

What has been said shows why the weightier commentators, intent on explaining consistently the article in St. Thomas on which we have been focusing attention,¹⁸ maintain that the three phases discussed by St. Thomas as affecting all human habits ought not to be separated.

¹⁶ In the treatment of IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 1.

¹⁷ No other rendering of St. Paul's sense seems possible; cf. Eph. 2:8.

¹⁸ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2.

They are intimately connected, namely: (1) the relation of habits as distinct forms to their productive and therefore active principles; (2) their relation to natures, that is, to the divine nature when they participate in it, and to human nature as well; and (3) their relation to particular operations and ulterior objects resulting from them.

To clarify matters: A virtue is not infused (1) unless God is the only one who can and does produce it in us, (2) unless it conforms to the divine nature shared in by us, no less than to the second or created nature that constitutes us, and (3) unless it has an object that is essentially supernatural and beyond the reach of mere human intelligence and will.

Not to admit this course of reasoning is to connive at nominalism by riveting attention on facts and the doing of things, without paying heed to the spiritual or intelligible nature of the things done. Converts are an example if, by professing glibly that they believe, they are empty interiorly of all perception touching the innermost character of infused faith.

To go a step further. If it were possible naturally to attain to the formal object of infused faith, it would be equally possible to attain to the formal object of charity. In that case the object of charity would not be above the reach of natural good will. The charity of wayfarers on earth would no longer be specifically the same as that of the elect who have reached heaven. Yet the charity of the blessed along the way, like the beatific vision itself, has to be essentially supernatural because of its formal object. Only when the charity of mortals is of the same kind and supernatural grade as that of the spirits in heaven can the words of St. Paul describing it fit the truth: "Charity never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8).¹⁹

¹⁹ *Caritas nunquam excidit* (1 Cor. 13:8). A more extended treatment of this fundamental question is presented by the author in other works; cf. *De Gratia* (Turin, 1947), pp. 375-87, "Habitus et actus specificantur ab objecto formale"; *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 469-515.

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Introduction	xi

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES IN GENERAL

(Ia IIae, Q. 62)

Article 1: Are there Any Theological Virtues?	3
Article 2: Are Theological Virtues Distinct from Intellectual and Moral Virtues?	11
Article 3: Should Faith, Hope, and Charity Be Designated As the Theological Virtues?	12
Article 4: Are There Grades of Theological Virtues?	17
Miscellaneous Queries (Ia IIae, QQ. 63-69)	26

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE OF FAITH

(IIa IIae, QQ. 1-16)

Introduction and Division of the Tract	43
--	----

QUESTION ONE

The Object of Faith

Introduction	46
Article 1: Is the Object of Faith Prime Truth?	51
Article 2: Is the Object of Faith Complex after the Manner of a Proposition?	84
Article 3: Can There Be Any Falsity Imbedded in Faith?	90
✓Article 4: Can the Object of Faith Be Seen?	98
✓Article 5: Can Things That Are of Faith Be Known?	109
Article 6: Should the Truths of Faith Be Distinguished through Separate Articles?	121
Article 7: Has There Been Any Development in the Articles of Faith from Age to Age?	125
Article 8: Is It Suitable to Enumerate Articles of Faith?	149
✓Article 9: The Formulation of Symbols or Creeds	153
Article 10: The Supreme Pontiff and the Formulation of a Creed	154

QUESTION TWO

The Interior Act of Faith

Article 1:	Is Believing the Same Thing as Thinking with Assent?	156
✓ Article 2:	What Do Believing in a God, Believing God and Believing in God Mean?	162
Article 9:	(anticipated) Is It Meritorious to Believe?	165
Article 10:	(anticipated) Does Inductive Reasoning to the Truths of Faith Diminish the Merit of Belief in Them?	168
Article 3:	Does Salvation Require Faith in Anything That Is above the Grasp of Reason?	189
Article 4:	Is There Any Obligation to Hold as Objects of Faith What Can be Proved by Natural Reason?	195
Article 5:	Is There an Obligation to Believe Anything Explicitly?	197
Article 6:	Is It Equally Binding Upon All to Have Explicit Faith?	209
Article 7:	Is It Necessary for Salvation That All Who Attain Thereto Should Believe Explicitly in the Incarnation?	213
Article 8:	Is Explicit Faith in the Trinity a Medial Necessity for Salvation?	241

QUESTION THREE

The External Act of Faith

Article 1:	Is Confession of the Faith an Act of Faith?	245
Article 2:	The Necessity of Confessing the Faith for Salvation	246

QUESTION FOUR

The Virtue of Faith

Introduction		259
Article 1:	Is It Fitting to Define Faith as the "Substance of Things to Be Hoped for, the Evidence of Things That Appear Not"?	260
Article 2:	Does Faith Operate Subjectively in the Intellect as Its Proper Faculty?	267
Article 3:	Is Charity the Form of Faith?	274
Article 4:	Is It Numerically One and the Same Faith That May Be Alternatively Either Formed or Unformed, Living or Dead?	278
Article 5:	Is Faith a Virtue?	282
Article 6:	Is Faith a Single Virtue?	287
Article 7:	Should Faith Be Classified as First among the Virtues?	289
Article 8:	Is Faith More Certain Than Science and All Intellectual Virtues?	298

QUESTION FIVE
Those Who Have Faith

Article 1:	At the Moment of Origin, Was Either Angel or Man Endowed with Faith?	316
Article 2:	Do Demons Have Faith?	322
Article 3:	Can a Pertinacious Disbeliever in One Article of Faith Have Lifeless Faith in the Other Articles?	331
Article 4:	Can Faith Be Greater in One Man than in Another?	342

QUESTION SIX
The Efficient Cause of Faith

Article 1:	Is Faith Infused Into Man by God?	348
Article 2:	Is Lifeless Faith a Gift of God?	361

QUESTION SEVEN
The Effects of Faith

Article 1:	Is Fear an Effect of Faith?	364
Article 2:	Is Purification of the Heart an Effect of Faith?	366

QUESTION EIGHT
The Gift of Understanding

Article 1:	Is Understanding a Gift of the Holy Ghost?	369
Article 2:	Is the Gift of Understanding Compatible with the Ingrained Obscureness of Faith?	373
Article 3:	Is the Gift of Understanding Both Speculative and Practical?	376
Article 4:	Is the Gift of Understanding Possessed by All Just Men?	377
Article 5:	Can Anybody in the State of Mortal Sin Possess the Gift of Understanding?	381
Article 6:	How Is Understanding Distinguished from the Other Gifts of the Holy Ghost?	382
Article 7:	Which One of the Beatitudes Listed in the Gospel Corresponds to the Gift of Understanding?	384
Article 8:	What Fruit of the Holy Ghost Corresponds to the Gift of Understanding?	387

QUESTION NINE
The Gift of Knowledge

Article 1:	Is Knowledge a Gift of the Holy Ghost?	393
Article 2:	Are Divine Things Attained or Encompassed by the Gift of Knowledge?	395

Article 3:	Is the Gift of Knowledge Practical or Speculative?	396
Article 4:	With What Beatitude is the Gift of Knowledge Aligned?	397

QUESTION TEN

Unbelief in General

Article 1:	Is Unbelief a Sin?	401
Article 2:	Is Unbelief Seated in the Intellect as in Its Subject?	406
Article 3:	Is Unbelief the Greatest of Sins?	408
Article 4:	Are All the Works of Unbelievers Sins?	409
Article 5:	Is the Sin of Unbelief of One or Many Kinds?	410
Article 6:	Are There Grades of Unbelief?	411
Article 7:	Should Public Controversies with Unbelievers be Encouraged?	412
Article 8:	Should Unbelievers Be Forced into the Faith?	413
Article 9:	Is it Lawful to Communicate with Unbelievers?	416
Article 10:	May Unbelievers Occupy Prelacies or Have Dominion Over the Faithful?	418
Article 11:	Are the Religious Observances of Unbelievers to Be Tolerated in a Catholic State?	419
Article 12:	May the Children of Jews and Other Unbelievers Be Baptized against Their Parents' Will?	419

QUESTION ELEVEN

Heresy

Article 1:	Is Heresy a Species of Unbelief?	423
Article 2:	Is Heresy Strictly Concerned with the Things of Faith?	425
Article 3:	Should Heretics Be Tolerated?	446
Article 4:	Should Catholics Who Have Been Perverted by Heresy Be Welcomed Back into the Church?	454

QUESTION TWELVE

Apostasy

Article 1:	Is Apostasy a Form of Unbelief?	456
Article 2:	Does a Ruler Forfeit Dominion Over His Subjects by Becoming an Apostate?	457

QUESTION THIRTEEN

Blasphemy in General

Article 1:	Is Blasphemy Opposed to the Confession of Faith?	458
Article 2:	Is Blasphemy Always a Mortal Sin?	458

Article 3: Is Blasphemy the Most Grievous of All Sins?	459
Article 4: Do the Damned Blaspheme?	460

QUESTION FOURTEEN

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

Article 1: Is the Sin Against the Holy Ghost the Same as the One Classified as "of Certain Malice"?	460
Article 2: Are There Different Species of Sins Against the Holy Ghost?	462
Article 3: Can the Sin against the Holy Ghost Be Forgiven?	463
Article 4: Can One Sin against the Holy Ghost before Sinning in Any Other Way?	465

QUESTION FIFTEEN

Blindness and Dullness of Mind

Article 1: Is Blindness of Mind a Sin?	466
Article 2: Is Dullness of Sense or Intellectual Obtuseness the Same as Spiritual Blindness?	466
Article 3: What is the Origin of Mental Blindness and Dullness of Sense?	467

QUESTION SIXTEEN

The Precepts of Faith, Knowledge, and Understanding

Article 1: In the Old Law, Should There Have Been Given Any Precepts to Believe?	469
Article 2: Was There Any Suitability in Formulating Precepts of Knowledge and Understanding in the Old Law?	470
Index	475

THE
THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES
IN GENERAL

(*Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62)

THE FOLLOWING four articles treat of the existence, definition, and division of the theological virtues:

I) Whether there are any theological virtues. II) In what manner are they distinct from intellectual and moral virtues? III) How many of them are there and what are their names? IV) How are they graded?

Article 1

Are There Any Theological Virtues?

This inquiry deals with their existence and necessity taken together.

Statement of the question. That theological virtues are nonexistent might be contended on the following grounds: (1) conceived as superior to human nature, they do not belong to man; (2) being divine virtues they can exist only as exemplars residing in the mind of God; (3) for subordination to God man has a sufficient equipment in his own nature through the faculties of reason and will. *Being* or *ens* is the field of the intellect wherein one arrives at the discernment of Prime Being. In the pursuance of good as a universal object, man's will develops a love of the Supreme Good. It reaches to God above all.

Aquinas' conclusion. In addition to purely human virtues, it is needful that some particular virtues be divinely bestowed on man to fit him for his supernatural end. Those necessary virtues are called theological. The historical study of the Gospel and the mastery of its content of external revelation, even though backed up by miracles, will not do. Man's own good nature or good will cannot make them enough for salvation.

1. *Holy Scripture furnishes proof.* Not only do the inspired writers record precepts of faith, hope, and charity, they also declare those virtues to be a "gift of God." The virtues cohere with an interior supernatural grace, thoroughly distinct from exterior revelation. The fact that the revelation is supernatural and confirmed by miracles makes no difference in the premises.

On faith. Witness the exhortation in Ecclesiasticus (2:8, 9, 10): "You who fear the Lord, believe him . . . hope in him . . . love him." Add the following from St. Mark (16:16): "Proclaim the Gospel to all crea-

tion. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." From St. John (3:18): "The believer in God's Son is not condemned. The unbeliever has already been condemned."

Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees is to the point. "Unless you believe that I am he, you shall die in your sin" (Jn. 8:24).

The object of faith is God revealed. "All things that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you" (Jn. 15:15). Faith is God's personal gift: "There are some among you who do not believe" (Jn. 6:65); "For that reason I said to you that no one can come to me unless it be granted him by my Father"; and again: "Unless the Father who sent me draws him" (Jn. 6:66, 44).¹ "You do not believe because you are none of my sheep. My sheep hearken to my voice" (Jn. 10:27). St. Paul explains: "By grace you are saved through faith and not by yourselves. It is God's gift" (Eph. 2:8).

On hope. "It is better to hope in the Lord than to trust in princes" (Ps. 117:9); "Mercy shall encompass him who hopes in the Lord" (Ps. 31:10). "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped. Let me never be confounded" (Ps. 30:2); "We exult in hope of the glory of the sons of God" (Rom. 5:2). Everywhere hope ranks as a gift of God. St. Paul's blessing in Romans (15:13) expels all doubt: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope."

On charity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart" (Mt. 22:37). Charity, too, is a gift of God. "The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Ghost who was given to us" (Rom. 5:5).²

Church councils explain the doctrine of Holy Scripture. The Council of Trent defines: "When one is justified through the remission of sins, man receives all these things at once. They are infused by Jesus Christ" (Denz. 800). Among "the things," faith, hope, and charity are specified. The reason adduced is clear. Mere faith without the joint gifts of hope and charity "does not, on the one hand, unite the soul perfectly with Christ; nor on the other does it produce a living member" in his Mystical Body. Because of this failure it is most truly said: "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:17). The fact explains why the Council of Vienna,

¹ The author cites John 6:44 in his text by number. Therefore, we have inserted it into the translation. He quotes 6:65 without giving the number. The texts complete each other.—Tr.

² Compare St. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 37 (*Enchiridion* chaps. 3-5) with St. Gregory, *Morals* I (chap. 28).

facing theologians who held to the forgiveness of guilt through the power of baptism without the conferring of grace, declared it "more probable" that "in infant baptism all virtues are infused together" (Denz. 483).

The present topic has, therefore, more than a theological impact. It is a dogma of faith that there are theological virtues and that adhesion to exterior supernatural revelation in the right way postulates them and their operation. It is not a substitute for them. Without them an alleged achievement of faith through the historico-philosophical study of the Gospel and its miracles is a delusion, no matter how good one's will may be assumed to be in the order of nature.

2. In the body of the article (q. 62, a. 1.) what does St. Thomas fix upon? It is not his aim to demonstrate by unaided human reasoning a nebulous existence of theological virtues. At the end of the article he affirms a contrary definite conviction. Theological "virtues are delivered by divine revelation only. The revelation is made through Holy Scripture." But being essentially supernatural, the said virtues cannot be known naturally, so long as *verum* and *ens*, *truth* and *being*, are convertible terms.

Cajetan calls attention to the validity of St. Thomas' premises, one of which is a proposition that is believed, the other a proposition that is known. The combination produces a theological conclusion. But the conclusion itself is elsewhere embodied in revelation and honored by the Church as a dogma.

The position of Scotus is one of *denial* that the need of infused faith can be proved from revelation. He maintains as a certainty that faith is infused by God. But he challenges theologians to prove the insufficiency of acquired faith, coupled with good will, to attain the same end.

The argument of Aquinas points to truth in the opposite direction. It amounts to this: Faith teaches that we are ordained to supernatural beatitude. It is obvious, however, that performances proportionate to a supernatural end have to proceed from principles that are proportionate; which proportion requires that the principles themselves be supernatural. Therefore, there have to be in man supernatural virtues which fit him to reach his supernatural goal. They are the theological virtues.

The major premise is embedded in numerous passages of Holy Scripture. St. Thomas cites St. Peter (2 Pt. 1:4). Through Jesus Christ, God "has granted us his precious and very great promises in order that . . . through his promises you become partakers of the divine nature.

It is New Testament doctrine generally: God has "predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29); "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9); "We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him even as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2). The absolute supernatural stamp of such beatitude has been affirmed in numerous definitions of the Church. It is the stand taken by the Vatican Council against contemporary naturalism (cf. Denz. 1785).

The minor premise in which we have couched the thought of Aquinas is based on the necessity of having an operation proportionate to the object or end by which it is specified. The object peculiar to the theological virtues is man's last end, which is exclusively of the supernatural order. That supernatural performances may be connatural for us, so as to be unremittingly exercised throughout life—we need permanent virtues to control them. This doctrine is brought out more clearly in the *Summa*, under the heading: "Whether charity is anything created in the soul, or is the Holy Ghost himself in action, moving the soul to love."³

No act is perfectly produced by any active potency without being connatural; that is to say, without being made apt through some form impelling it as a principle of action. Therefore, unless some form in the shape of a permanent virtue be superadded to a natural potency, in order to adapt it to an act of love that is supernatural, its operation would be maladjusted. This disorder would make it more imperfect than natural deeds, more imperfect than the exercise of other virtues, without being either easy or pleasant.

Any act that is supernatural, and yet connatural, needs to emanate from a proportionate principle energizing within us as a kind of second nature. Nothing but infused virtue can bring such a thing to pass. The principle underlying this minor premise is the axis of this whole study. Virtues and their acts are specified by their object. It follows that to know, to hope for, and to love the supernatural object which is our ultimate goal, supernatural acts and virtues adapted to it are indispensable.

The question arises here: Why are the said virtues called theological?⁴ A threefold answer is appropriate. The formal focus of theology is

³ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 2.

⁴ The response may be checked toward the end of the article under analysis, viz. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 1., immediately before the replies.

God. Now, 1) the theological virtues have God for their object; 2) they are infused by God alone; 3) there is no way of knowing about them except through revelation that is divine.

Of these three explanations only the first is characteristic in an exclusive sense. The second and third are equally true of infused moral virtues. Accordingly, all Thomists hold most firmly that the formal object *quo* and *quod* of any theological virtue cannot be anything but God. We believe, hope in, and love *God* in his intimate life, not as the author of nature, but as the author of grace—in other words, God, as the object of supernatural knowledge.

For the reasons advanced thus far, Thomists deny that the formal motive of infused faith can be either a miracle naturally known or even official testimony of the created grade, issued by the Church when propounding a revelation. These intermediaries are necessary, indeed, but only as conditions.⁵

The formal motivation of faith has to come from an uncreated agent, essentially supernatural—namely, Prime Truth. To his mystery-laden revelation we cling supernaturally, under the inspiration communicated with enlightenment directly by the Holy Ghost.⁶

Acquired faith, such as a demon accumulates, goes back no further than created agencies naturally known; the factual evidence of miracles, for instance.⁷ That is why we reject the doctrine of Scotus and Molina, preserved by L. Billot. According to its tenets, the formal object of infused faith, denominated *quo* and *quod*, can become known and be attained without the interior grace of faith. The confirmation of exterior revelation by miracles suffices for its basis.⁸

⁵ Human testimony can produce of itself nothing but human certitude. The principle is rigorously applied by canon law in restricting or regularizing the publication of books. The private appraisal of alleged proofs of sanctity and miracles in hagiology and mysticism must always be left open and subject to correction, pending the sovereign judgment of the Holy See.—Tr.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 3 ad 1.

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, a. 2 ad 1.

⁸ The thesis here repudiated is expounded by Billot in his work *De Virtutibus Infusis* (1905), p. 439, n. 23. He says there: "In supernatural acts of the virtues, as elicited by wayfarers, the one and only supernatural factor which effects their proportion to the inherent condition of their objects, is the principle of grace which elevates the potency operating. It does not issue from any functioning which we associate with a more special object, such as the material object *quod*, the thing in which we believe, for which we hope and which we love. Neither does it derive from the formal object, on account of which we believe, hope and love."

Like Scotus, the nominalists, and Molina, Billot supports the view that acquired faith and infused faith both have the same formal object and the interior grace of faith is not necessary to procure that object.

Consistency requires that hope and charity be disposed of in the same way.

A doubt. If man had been created (not in the state of original supernatural innocence, but) in the state called "pure nature" (which has never existed except on the pages of hypothetical theology), would he have been endowed with natural virtues ordaining him immediately toward God as his last end in the natural order? By natural virtues should be understood acquired wisdom about God, natural hope or trust in God, and natural charity. The doubt does not concern acquired wisdom inseparably connected, with which there must be an acquired idea of God. The doubt cleaves authorities apart only on the subjects of acquired hope and acquired charity.

Our reply agrees with that of the Salmanticenses.⁹ Suárez and Lorca hold that acquired charity is manifest even in man's present condition (of nature fallen and redeemed). Certain men are known to foster a natural love of God above all things. "What then," we are asked, "would prevent the existence of this same acquired charity in the state of pure nature? Is there not more reason for admitting its suitableness in that state, than in the present condition of humanity?"

The supporters of this position proceed to give proof. A merely human act of love directed toward God as the author of nature could gain strength by repetition and thereby engender a good habit, a vir-

Relative to supernatural objects in this world, L. Billot asserts (*ibid.*, n. 5) that "there are real natural habits capable of attaining to them." That being true, we may ask: Why is it that the formal object of charity, *quo* and *quod*, in spite of exterior revelation, cannot be attained by merely natural goodwill? It would smack outrightly of Pelagianism, as Suárez alleged against Molina (Cf. Suárez, *De Gratia*, II, chap. 11, cited in *De Revelatione*, I, p. 491; Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, disp. 3, dub. 3).

The thesis is a sweeping negation of our axial or fundamental principle, viz., habits and acts are specified by the same formal object. In the first place ranks the admission that our faith, which is essentially and intrinsically supernatural, has the same formal object *quod* and *quo*, that lies within the grasp of acquired faith. According to Billot, "supernatural habits are not necessarily distinguished from natural habits according to their objects" (*De Gratia*, I, p. 439, nn. 4-6).

We have threshed out this matter at length in *De Revelatione* (I, pp. 458-515; cf. esp. p. 489). Aquinas treats of it in answer to the inquiry: "Whether man can, without grace, come to the knowledge of anything as true" (*Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 1).

Billot's citation of Cajetan in his own favor is absolutely worthless. Any interested student may see for himself by examining Cajetan's commentary on this question, art. 3. He will find the Master there lays down our habitual refrain: "There must be a proportionate correspondence between object, habit and act." An object that is supernatural, by that very fact exceeds the due proportion of a natural act or habit. They belong to different orders, the natural and the supernatural. The mind cannot be perfected by them unless, hanging together as they should, they are all infused together by a direct act of God. Cajetan's treatise deserves perusal.

⁹ Cf. *De Caritate* (disp. 7, dub. 1, n. 3). The Salmanticenses are the Carmelite Thomists of Salamanca.

tue, the same way as in the cultivation of other noble deeds. Now it is commonly admitted that, aside from the virtue of infused religion which renders a cult to God as author of the supernatural order, humans very conspicuously exercise themselves in the practice of religion, for the fostering of worship toward God as the author of nature. Consistently, as offsetting infused charity, one must make room for a form of acquired charity. Suárez might have added: and for acquired hope as well. But the view of Suárez is rejected by the Salmanticenses and by many other Thomists. It is false and contrary to the Angelic Doctor. Aquinas states: "The nature of the human will is sufficient of itself to establish orderliness in the attainment of nature's goal. It tends that way instinctively. It fits in and matches by its own conformity."¹⁰

St. Thomas further clarifies his thought: "What makes virtue necessary is the regulation of potencies for good accomplishment. But in beings whose natural potencies are self-determinant in the direction of goodness, special virtues are not required." The human will is of that stamp. Its object and its end in all attainments attract it because they are *good*. Insofar as its own determinateness is concerned, its only aim is toward what is *good*. Goodness, therefore, is in the aim, because it has a fixed purpose, an object, and an end proportionate to human nature. The same is true with respect to the ultimate object in its universal bearing on the human will.

The fact explains why philosophers have not been accustomed to assign additional virtues to make or to keep the will good. Virtues are restricted to "the means of attaining an end. When, as in the will, the end itself is invariable," they are not needed.¹¹ Cajetan pursues the same course of reasoning in his Commentary (art. 3). The Salmanticenses advance a priori a singular reason that impresses this author as more than merely probable. A habit that turns the will to its ultimate natural end ought to be superior, or at least equal, to the will's own power. If it is not, how can it lift up the will sufficiently to subordinate it to its last end? But take whatever acquired habit you like, it is bound to be an accessory, inferior to the will itself. It may be a phase, a part, or a product; it is always less than the will. It falls short; it must fail. A merely acquired habit can never turn the will to its ultimate natural goal. It may accompany the will, but there is no room left for it to have such an aim as its own peculiar object.

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 3 ad 1.

¹¹ *Summa theol.*, q. 56, a. 6; q. 106, a. 3, ad 1; IIIa, dist. 27, q. 2, a. 3 ad 5m.

No wonder that Cajetan declares: "The will's own natural inclination toward good is something more powerful than any virtue." No special habit is required in the will to break down difficulties in the way of its trend toward good. Whatever difficulties are encountered spring from the passions, which are extrinsic to the will, or from forthright imprudence or injustice. At all events they are provided against, by the cardinal and annexed virtues.

Confirmation. Following the Salmanticenses, an acquired virtue is not balanced by a single act, but by many. Neither is a habit lost through a single lapse, but through many. Therefore, granting for the moment an acquired virtue of God-love, it would not be destroyed by a passing mortal sin. As a consequence, the sinner who would not repent of the passing mortal sin, would personalize an absurdity. Remaining in the state of mortal sin, he would be habitually turned away from God as his last end, and yet reputedly turned toward God, the last end, in the natural order. This is impossible.

At this point it is appropriate to weigh the arguments of Suárez. Through the repetition of acts belonging to the natural love of God, whatever follows amounts only to increased skill or facility in neutralizing extrinsic obstacles. Repeated acts of laughter have a parallel effect. They do not engender a habit. One is naturally disposed in advance to laugh when an occasion arises. In the instinctive inclination postulated, namely, to love God as the author of nature more than one loves oneself, the same holds true.¹² From the repetition of acts of supernatural charity, what is begotten is not an acquired habit but a disposition tending toward an increase of charity. It is different with the acquired virtue of religion; for worship may be imperfect either through deficiency or excess.

The Salmanticenses go further. An act of God-love, superior to love of all else, yet honoring God as a natural end, requires no additional virtue of the intellect. The light of its own natural understanding suffices.

A conclusion is thrust upon us: What we have embraced as a more probable opinion of the two supplied above might well be considered as certain, if applied to man redeemed. But in the state of fallen nature before redemption, man, destitute of grace, sin-ridden through racial guilt, does not have it in his natural powers to love God efficaciously above all things, as author of nature, either with an affective love or by

¹² Suárez claims to have proof from the *Summa*, Ia IIae, q. 26, a. 3.

a bone-dry effective charity.¹³ The nearest approach to alleged realities of the kind is barren sentimental love, not objectively efficient, but cherished subjectively as a *velleity*, a kind of Platonic complacency measuring out toward, without ever reaching, divine perfections. A *velleity* of the sort does not engender an acquired habit. A parallel conclusion should be drawn, touching the virtue of hope. It is compulsory to deny that there are any such things as acquired theological virtues. Theological virtues have to be infused and their existence cannot be known without revelation.

Article 2

Are Theological Virtues Distinct from Intellectual and Moral Virtues?

Statement of the question. It seems they are not: 1) Rationalism seeks a hearing. Theological virtues, so classified, either develop the field of intelligence, which would circumscribe them as intellectual virtues, or they mature the perfection of man's appetitive nature, which would reduce them to the level of moral virtues. 2) Wisdom, an intellectual virtue, trains the soul toward God. 3) There is no difference between the theological virtue of charity and love, which is put down by St. Augustine as the key to all four cardinal virtues.

Aquinas' conclusion. The theological virtues are specifically distinct from moral and intellectual virtues.

1. In general terms, whatever is above the nature of man is distinct from all that is on man's natural level. But the theological virtues rank above the nature of man, whereas the intellectual and moral virtues match it. Therefore, the theological virtues belong in a class apart. We are here treating only of acquired moral virtues, not of infused ones.¹

2. More precise is the argument based on the specification of virtues by their object. Habits belong to different species when their formal objects are different. But the formal object of the theological virtues is God, manifested in a manner superior to natural knowledge, whereas the object of acquired virtues, intellectual or moral, is totally within the natural scope of human knowledge. *Ergo*.

¹³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 3.

¹ St. Thomas does not touch upon the proof of infused moral virtues up to q. 63, a. 4.

In the scale of excellence, Cajetan significantly ranges the theological virtues as belonging *per se* to the essentially supernatural order of grace. Grace is less than hypostatic union; but it is above the powers and intrinsic needs of any or every nature—created or creatable. It is superior to miracles, which are supernatural only because of the way in which they produce effects. Neither the creaturely operator nor the effects of a miracle need to contain any habitual factor that is essentially and intrinsically supernatural, like grace. Resurrection of bodies from the dead of itself restores only natural life (to saints and reprobates alike).

Corollary. From this article it is apparent that, if demons are in possession of an acquired faith based ultimately on the evidence of miracles, their finding cannot be identical with the infused faith of Christians, which issues directly from Prime Truth in whom it is supernaturally inherent. The specific distinction of habits according to their formal object imposes the admission that acquired habits cannot have the same formal motive as habits *per se* infused. [The illumination in an advertisement, the light turned on, is quite a different thing from the letters illuminated.] Hence, St. Thomas comments: "Demons do not believe, in the sense of voluntary acquiescence. When they are said to believe, it is because they are forced into inescapable positions by the undeniable evidence of what they behold."² To speak, therefore, of faith as a common talent belonging indifferently to human beings and reprobate spirits is misleading. Demons are effectively cut off from the light of grace with which the faithful are blessed.

Article 3

Should Faith, Hope, and Charity Be Designated as the Theological Virtues?

In other words: Is it suitable to hold to three theological virtues, no fewer, no more? And why three?

Statement of the question. Negation would seem to follow: 1) Because in view of the single definite inclination, on the part of nature, toward its ultimate natural end, one single and solitary theological virtue ought to suffice. 2) Charity will do, by itself. Faith and hope are

² *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 4.

obtruncated. Since faith is defective in knowledge, and hope is a passion, they both fall short as virtues. 3) At most there is room for only two theological virtues: one in the intellect, the other in the will. Only through these two higher faculties may the soul be oriented toward God. Sense potencies are of the wrong grade.

In view of the Church's doctrine establishing the three theological virtues, the above objections seem insipid. Nevertheless, in 1902 the Abbé de Bellevue, professor of dogma in the Seminary of Vannes, produced a work, *L'oeuvre du Saint Esprit*, in which he contended: "There is only one infused virtue. It is charity." On pages 40 and 90 he wrote: "It is astonishing that theologians admit commonly as distinct supernatural entities: sanctifying grace, three theological virtues, four principal infused moral virtues, besides several others connected with them, and seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. I am frightened at this procession, indefinitely separating supernatural realities as if they were all distinct."

Would the Abbé have been perturbed at the marvelous physical complexity of the eye or the ear? Be that as it may, he tried to project light and simplicity into the complicated material by reducing all supernatural habits to one. They are all so many manifestations of grace which he wrongly identified with charity. On page 99 he declared expressly: "Infused moral virtues and gifts are all one with charity as charity is one with grace. They all constitute one solitary supernatural habit radiating the diverse phenomena listed, as refracted aspects."

When the objection was put to him that faith and hope can exist without charity, as Holy Church has defined, he answered that living faith and living hope are not distinguishable from charity outside the mind of mere thinking (*ens rationis*). The consequence of such a tenet cleaves where it should mend. Faith without charity no longer would be the same faith it was before charity was lost. It would cease to be a gift of God. The contention is heretical.

An unmentionable and ridiculous (*ad ridendum*) defense of his thesis was published by Abbé de Bellevue in 1902. It took the form of a series of articles leveled against objections advanced by P. Frojet. The controversy decorated the pages of the *Revue Thomiste* (pp. 244, 336, 554).

What the diverting procedure illustrates for our purpose is this. Certain priests, even professors of dogmatic theology, owing to a lack of sufficient grounding in philosophy, lapse unwittingly into grave heretical positions. The principle which this volume has been prepared to

bring out was assuredly not grasped by Abbé de Bellevue. Not only are habits and acts specified, they are also diversified in their species by the formal object. Innocently enough, Abbé de Bellevue was playing nominalist. He was disdaining in St. Thomas' sound doctrine that which carries by its own weight. The experience makes it patent that the custom followed by St. Thomas of formulating three objections at the beginning of successive articles was an outcome of his foresight, covering numerous errors that would ensue [in minds with a misplaced focus].

Conclusion. It is consonant with reason to maintain that there are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. Reason alone cannot prove it, since all three virtues are essentially supernatural. Granted, however, that man has been destined and elevated to a supernatural end, the resources of reason may be drawn upon to show that three theological virtues would be needed and not merely one or two. Certitude about the fact is derived from faith.

1. *Scriptural Proof and Tradition.* The most explicit authority witnessing to this truth is St. Paul: "Now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. 13:13). Other inspired passages of Scripture, those previously cited, emphasize that these are the three virtues immediately infused by God. That is why they are called theological.

The distinction between the three is equally revealed. Charity is singled out as distinct from faith and hope in the words: "Charity never falls away." "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then, face to face" (1 Cor. 13:8, 12). Therefore, in heaven charity will be torn away from faith and hope. They are doomed to vanish.¹

It is just as certainly revealed that faith and hope survive in a soul bereft of charity. The Council of Trent committed itself to this survival of faith; and Pope Clement XI to the survival of hope. The latter, by condemning the Jansenist Quesnel, further established the independence of faith over hope. The condemned proposition reads: "When a sinner loses hope he loses all. Without hope in God there is no love of God." "Faith may yet survive" Trent counters, "for no mortal sin destroys faith except infidelity."²

Add to this the unanimity of Catholic tradition which supports three theological virtues—and just three, no fewer, no more. They were in error, the scattered originals who stood for infused religion as a fourth

¹ Cf. Denz. 530; 1 Cor. 13:8, 10.

² Denz. 1407; Trent nn. 808, 838.

or otherwise distinct theological virtue. St. Thomas bars the possibility by pointing out, to the contrary, that the formal object of religion is worship due to God and not God himself.³

2. *Theological Proof.* The scope of the theological virtues is to ordain the human intellect and will toward supernatural beatitude. This requires an elevation of the intellect through faith, and of the will through hope, for advancing along a hard way.

The spirit of charity must at all times encompass the goal. It is the exercise of actually embracing its end through love. That is why charity cannot be shaken off like faith or hope, in the beatific vision. Tending toward an invisible goal ceases when the goal is reached. Charity always possesses God. Faith and hope are its companions along the way to God.

Relative to the necessity of lifting up the intellect to a level of faith, where the knowledge of supernatural things is possible, all is certainty. But touching the will a difficulty arises. Is there room in the will for the other two theological virtues? Is not one enough, namely, charity?

Aquinas indicates two things influencing the will, man's appetitive faculty; one is its motion toward an end; the other is its self-adaptation in liking the end. These factors both figure in the Church's declaration that infused faith and infused hope can remain in a sinner who has forfeited charity. "Charity fastens man to God for God's own sake, through a union of the mind with God in loving affection. Through hope and faith man clings to God, as to a principle from which personal advantage or benefits are looked forward to for man's sake. The knowledge of truth, for instance, and the necessary assistance to reach heaven, are divine favors of the sort."⁴

Hope moves one to tend toward God as toward a fairly good end to reach, God himself being a sure aid in reaching it. But the momentum of charity grips that affection from the start. It advances the soul in such a way that man lives no longer for himself but for God.⁵

Hope is expectation. Like faith it may continue to exist without charity. As a theological virtue its ultimate formal object is the attainment of future beatitude, in virtue of merits actually possessed, if the soul is in the state of grace and charity; or of merits to be acquired and restored after repentance, if charity is for the present, nonexistent. Two

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 5.

⁴ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 17, aa. 5-6.

⁵ Compare *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 2 and q. 27, a. 3, which answers the inquiry: Whether charity dictates that God be loved for his own sake.

different kinships ensue from the expectation of one's last end as not yet reached—this is hope—and from affectively embracing the end as already attained—such is the love-union called charity.⁶

To say that the uniqueness of man's last end postulates only one theological virtue, and that the instinctive inclination of the will toward good suffices for it—that the human will in pursuit of its natural object shows itself adaptable to all intermediate necessities—is to miss the point at issue. Our problem concerns an order of realities high above nature's longest reach. No individual's natural faculty, therefore, bounded within nature's totality, can penetrate the supernatural order, much less suffice for the attainment of a supernatural goal.

To maintain further that faith and hope are too unreliable in the prosecution of virtuous enterprises to count as virtues by themselves, either naturally or supernaturally, can never isolate charity into an exclusive solitary theological virtue. It is only when some partial priority, an arbitrary preference, becomes dominant, that faith and hope in human friends are despoiled of virtuous firmness. The misplacing of confidence is easy. Faith or fidelity often snap. They are based blindly on assumptions of what turns out to be missing. Unfaithful people are untrue. Hope of the bravest type may be frustrated. Neither human faith nor human hope has in it sufficient firmness to guarantee the creaturely truth or the goodness which it presupposes, rests on, or promises.

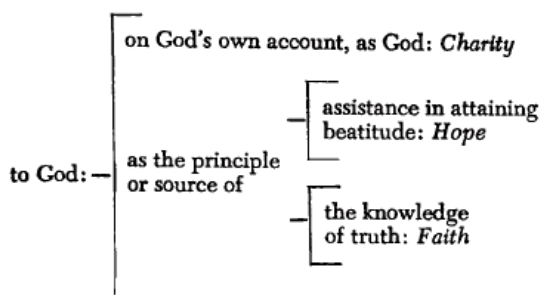
But to possess supernatural faith and hope or trust in God is to be endowed with solid virtues. God does not deceive nor is he ever deceived. Trust in him, based totally on his word, never confounds. On the other hand, dead faith and unformed hope are not perfect virtues; they cannot act the right way. Virtue is perfect, not by the bare doing of a thing, but by doing it well and according to good taste or likable form.

Hence, there are neither more nor fewer than three theological virtues. Three are required and suffice to conduct man to his ultimate supernatural destiny. This is a certainty of faith and is agreeable to natural truth.

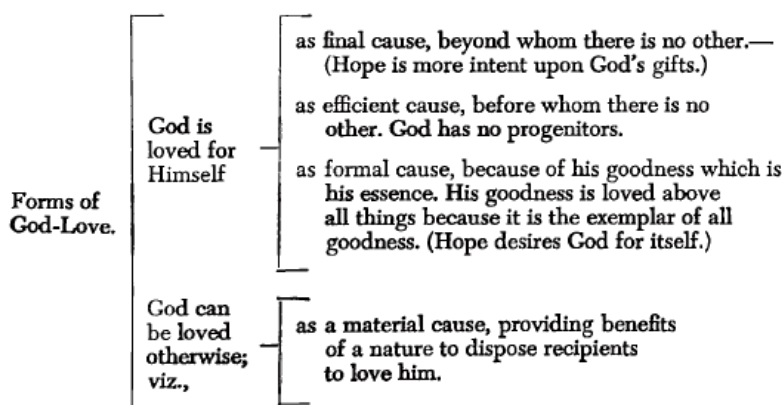
The distinction of the three theological virtues in the *Summa* is, for the sake of clearness, laid out in the following tables (cf. IIa IIae, q. 27, a. 3 and q. 17, a. 6).

Divine inherence [or indwelling] is effected in man by the theological virtues which attach him:

⁶ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 4. Cf. q. 62, a. 4 ad 2.



Through charity God must be loved for himself; this means formally and not merely as a finality or even as an efficient cause. In the range of philosophical causes, God-love, fostered for God's own sake, envelops and subordinates all other varieties to the formal. [In creatures, one thing is liked on account of another as its source, its end, its matter, or its form. But when God is loved for anything besides himself—for his gifts and benefits, for instance—another virtue is being exercised, which is inferior to charity; its name is hope.]



Article 4

Are There Grades of Theological Virtues?

Should Faith rank prior to hope and hope to charity?

The present inquiry bears on the grading of theological virtues, because distinctions always introduce a before and after relationship with respect to some norm. Is the common order of faith first, hope second, and charity third acceptable to reason?

It seems not: 1) Roots come first. All growth is from them. Now the root of all virtues is charity, as St. Paul conveyed to the Ephesians (3:17) in his prayer, "that you may be rooted and founded in charity." 2) St. Augustine implies that charity at least comes before hope. "Let a man believe and love," he says; then, "by acting rightly, hope will grow on him." 3) Love lies at the bottom of every affection. Charity cannot but precede hope.

Our conclusion is twofold. All three theological virtues are infused as habits simultaneously: 1) In the generation of acts, however, [from embryonic to adult forms] "practice makes perfect." The earlier forms are incomplete. They start from faith and mature through hope, both faith and hope functioning as imperfect virtues. Charity, the perfect product, comes last [I believe, I hope, I love]. 2) In the order of excellence, the perfect and perfecting virtue, charity, precedes faith and hope.

First conclusion. 1. All Christian tradition has held to St. Paul's enumeration to the Corinthians: "There remain these three: faith, hope and charity" (1 Cor. 13:13). The doctrine is illustrated by the Council of Trent in a description of how to prepare sinners for absolution. "The initial disposition toward conversion is an awakening and experience of courage, stimulated by divine grace. Learning with their ears what faith teaches, they are freely swayed toward God. . . . Admitting their sinfulness . . . they turn to the consideration of God's mercy and gradually brace up through hope. They trust that God will compassionate them out of regard for Christ's merits, whereupon they begin to love Christ as the fount of all justice; meanwhile a certain hatred and detestation of their sins takes possession of them."¹ Two forms of repentance are known to follow: contrition from perfect charity; and attrition—without charity, but inducing the sinner to qualify for it.

2. A theological proof, formulated as a double syllogism, may be advanced here. The will does not seek anything without knowing of it first. But through faith we know what to wish for, by hoping and loving. In the succession of these acts there is a lineal relationship, faith opening up the way for hope and charity. The hope that one conceives for an advantage depending on the will of another, puts him in a mood to hold the other in good repute, not so much because he is a dispenser of benefits, as because he is good in himself. When this reputation grows into a conviction, it develops a formal love of the benefactor, be-

¹ Denz. 798; compare 898, 915.

cause of the goodness that is in him. In other words, he is loved "for himself," or for his own sake. Applying this parallel to God-love, which in its purity attracts to God rather than to his gifts, theological hope based on God's promises precedes charity, which unites a soul formally with God because God in himself is all good.² At first, God's goodness, shown toward us by gifts bestowed or promises made, creates in us a disposition to love him. Later on, the gifts no longer count. We love God himself because of his essential goodness.

This is why the Council of Trent, in dwelling upon the way a sinner is prepared for the grace of justification, envisages an act of faith before the revival of hope, and an act of hope before the crowning act of charity. [It is God who is at work. The Master is converting a disciple.] First, God stirs the soul to seriousness in believing the Gospel and welcoming the mercy-laden divine assistance that is displayed in it. Secondly, he infuses confidence and hope in the support to be derived from that mercy. Thirdly, he moves the soul to love God as the source of all justice and for his own sake, so that the hatred of sin grows out of the purified attachment to God. (Incidentally, this supernatural providence begets the best and simplest method of prayer, defined as the lifting of the mind to God.) Observe the points in order: (1) humble adoration; (2) faith; (3) hope; (4) charity, affective and effective, expressing itself with a resoluteness that is firm.

A similar progression marks the passive purification of the spirit. In most cases God conducts the purification through a secret operation that removes every imperfection in the depths of the soul: 1) Faith is refined in the midst of temptations against faith. 2) Hope is strengthened amidst temptations against hope. 3) Charity endures the last purification of love, preparatory to the life of perfect union. The formal motive of all three theological virtues grows more and more obvious: it is God himself, exalted eminently above all inferior motives. St. Teresa brings this out in the Seventh Mansion. St. John amplifies it in his contribution to the mystery in the *Dark Night* (I and II). He compares God to a plowman who repeats the harrowing anew, in the same manner as before, only much deeper, in order that the wheat may get more firmly rooted. The three virtues rise higher and higher like stars. Their motives would not wrongly be named as follows: Prime Truth revealing; Inexhaustible Mercy assisting; Infinite Goodness prevailing over all other things demanding to be loved.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 27, a. 3.

Second conclusion. In the order of perfection, charity ranks before faith and hope.

1. *Authorities in Holy Writ.* St. Paul is emphatic: "Now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. 13:13); "If I were to have all faith so that I could remove mountains and were without charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). My will would be turned away from God. More definitively he warns the Galatians: "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith that works by charity" (Eph. 5:6). And again, to the Corinthians: "Charity never falls away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed" (1 Cor. 13:8). He might have added: or faith and hope nullified.

Not only does St. Paul classify charity ahead of all gifts—he makes it the root of all virtues: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envies not deals not perversely, is not puffed up. Nor is it ambitious. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4, 5, 7). The Colossians are told why: "Above all things have charity. It is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14).

2. *Theological Proof.* Whatever is perfective, without modification, is more perfect than an object which is perfectible. But charity, in an absolute sense, confers perfection upon faith and hope. Therefore, it is more perfect than they. To speak more expressly: a form that bestows perfection is more perfect than what it perfects, provided the communication is not restricted by limitations or interference. [In scholastic terms, the effectiveness itself should operate *simpliciter*, but limitations or interference would change it *secundum quid*.] Faith and hope are formless without charity. Informed by charity, they gain their setting as perfect virtues. Therefore, since charity is a perfective form, the mother and root of all virtues, it is proved to be distinctively more perfect than all other virtues. It would be different if its effectiveness were only partial or *secundum quid*. That is what happens with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It makes them inferior to the theological virtues in perfection. But charity confers unmodified perfection. "Faith without works is dead" [and works without charity are dead; that is to say supernaturally fruitless].³

The *Summa* rings clear. "Faith and hope can exist without charity;

³ These premises are based on the *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 4 and q. 68, a. 8. Cf. Jas. 2:17; (Denz. 800).

but when they do, they are not virtues in the rigorous sense. Wayfarers are better off with the love of God than they would be with sterile knowledge about God."⁴ The reason is this: the intellect attracts God into itself, fitting him into its own inferior conceptual molds. The will, on the contrary, rises toward God as he is in himself. St. Thomas displays a clear grasp of charity, which he extols as "the greatest of theological virtues; not because it reaches a greater object than faith or hope, but because of its greater closeness to the object." Faith and hope imply distance from God. The truths of faith are things not seen. The objects of hope are not possessed. But the love called charity embraces its object as a real and present acquaintance; and the object, in a certain sense, is already residing within the lover. The latter, because of this indwelling, is attracted toward conscious union, whence St. John wrote: "He who abides in charity abides in God and God in him" (1 Jn. 4:16).⁵

The Angelic Doctor offers a clear cut distinction between hope, living and dead. Living hope qualifies one to desire future beatitude in virtue of merits actually possessed. Dead hope relies on merits yet to be gained or restored, though missing at present.

An objection. Hope is based on a liking and every liking is an expression of love or affection. Therefore, the love called charity is prior to the hope which it engenders.

Reply. With respect to a thing hoped for, there is a longing love that precedes hope. There is never a yearning for anything until it is liked and desired. For that reason Aquinas explains: "Hope is love with a longing, because he who hopes is intent on obtaining an advantage of some kind for himself." Faith furnishes in advance a devout liking for what one believes; and that is equivalent to a desire for the good which has been promised to believers [independently of charity].⁶ But when hope is supernaturally alive, it generates a love of friendship for the author of its help. Once a recipient realizes his dependence on a helper for success, he is led to esteem his benefactor more than he apprizes his aid. The advantage to self dissolves into a love ennobled as friendship. Such is charity. Thereafter the degrees of friendship sharpen hope the more; the effect being an enlivening of hope through charity's own influx. Faith was a preliminary disposition. Charity imparts mature per-

⁴ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 4; Ia, q. 82, a. 3.

⁵ This paragraph was attached by the author as a footnote.—Tr.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 8; q. 2, a. 9 and a. 1 ad 3.

fection. A cause that rounds out maturity is greater than its effect. A cause that remotely prepares for it, is less than the same effect.⁷

First Doubt. What is the order of dignity governing faith and hope?

Reply. Authorities disagree. More likely, faith is nobler than hope. According to Medina and Bañez, all distinctions aside, faith is absolutely more excellent than hope. Faith regulates hope by offering it an object and it receives from hope no increase of perfection, as it does from charity. Indeed, without charity, hope does not properly merit the grade of a virtue. Nor, on the other hand, does hope score above faith on the ground that the love of God is better than the knowledge of God. This is prevented by reason of hope's failure to attain to divine friendship. [Charity is friendship.] Hope is mere "longing for friendship or for lower gains arrived at and wanted as desirable for oneself." The longing desire of hope does stretch beyond self to God as the ultimate end. God is the last end sought in the act of hoping, just as in the acts of all the Christian virtues. Charity alone loves God formally for his own sake and not merely with a causative finality. Charity's accomplishment, in the strict sense, consists in reaching God and resting in him as the ultimate of all ends, loved directly for himself without intermediaries.⁸ Through charity God must be loved for himself. He is loved on his own account, not dividedly or partially, as one among many aims, the last of all—nor as one among many causes, the highest of all—but formally, because of the exclusive totality of his essential goodness. [God is all good.]

Corollaries. 1) Faith and hope can exist without charity. But the earlier Protestants went astray in upholding the sufficiency of bare faith for supernatural justification. 2) Contemporary Protestants, especially the liberals, need conversion to the following certainty: Nobody can have or practice Christian charity toward God or neighbor without infused faith. Nothing can be willed without being known beforehand. Supernatural willing postulates supernatural knowing. [Natural knowledge will not do.] 3) The erroneousness of quietistic indifference to hope, is dispatched by the affirmation of the principle: "Nobody on earth can have charity without hope" (Denz. 1327-1337).

Second doubt. What sense is there in the statement that the three habits called theological virtues are all infused together? Cajetan admits that a triple interpretation is possible, but only one is true. Keen

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 66, a. 6, ad 3.

⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 7, to be compared with Ia IIae, q. 66, a. 4 ad 7.

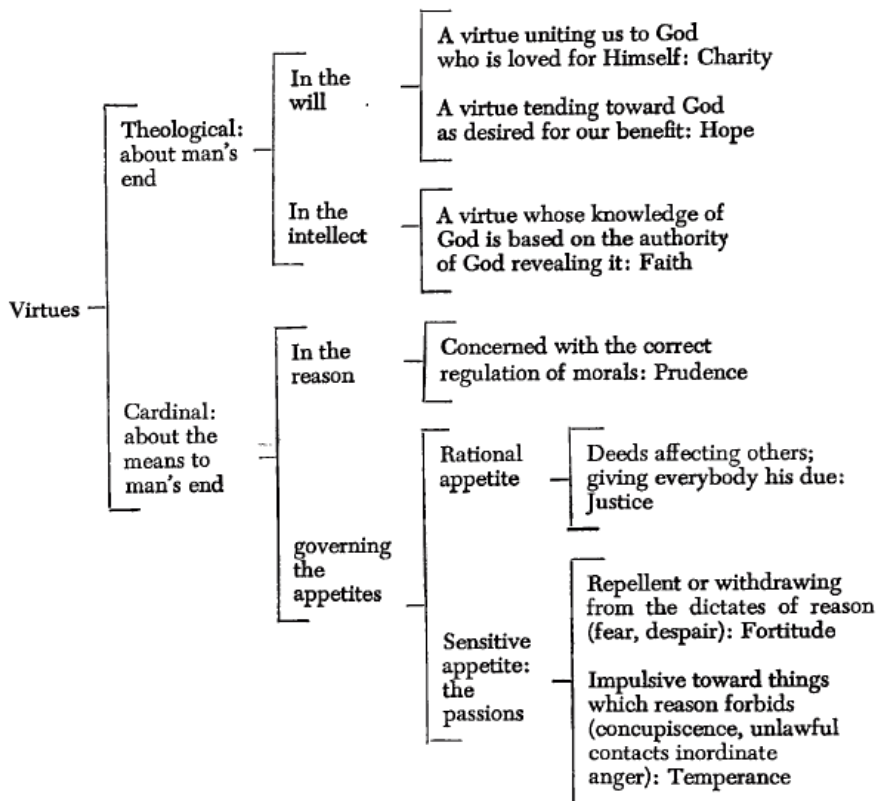
theological minds are alert for the formal sense of whatever words they use. They want to be understood *per se*, and not in refracted material senses that may be multiplied *per accidens*. In the formal sense all three theological virtues are normally infused together. It is *per accidens* that charity is infused alone, by the forgiveness of sinners whose faith and hope are real, though dead; or that faith and hope are infused without charity at baptism, when it is received validly, but unworthily.

Two cautions are in order. To claim that when one theological virtue is infused, the other two are infused with it simultaneously, would be running counter to daily occurrences. Sincere penitents, after mortal sin, have charity restored to them without having lost either faith or hope. On the other hand, to claim that the infusion of one theological virtue demands of itself the infusion of any other, is untenable. If an impenitent fornicator, for instance, is baptized validly, there is no doubt he receives both habits of faith and hope, yet neither one on account of the other, but both, as a pair, accompanying the radical baptismal character. The baptized candidate is branded indelibly as one of the faithful. Nevertheless, he has not received with the sacrament, nor does he receive derivatively from the infused dead faith and hope, the chief missing virtue of charity.⁹

It follows that the normal simultaneity in the infusion of the three theological virtues must be understood in its formal sense. The formal sense involves the agent who infuses—God—and the act of infusion. Whatever interference there may be in the simultaneousness of the triple effect happens *per accidens*. It is ascribable to some material cause, such as the subjective indisposition of the recipient or his being out of repair [as it were, by mortal sin]. This formal sense is real and true. Insofar as the infusion itself is concerned, all three theological virtues move in together, barring particular obstructions, with which they have had nothing to do. This contingency is *per accidens*. It does not alter the exactness of propositions which, to be scientific, must formulate principles according to what happens *per se*, not to what occurs *per accidens*.

Summary. As means for the attainment of one's last end, the doctrine is suitable and sound that assigns three theological virtues, divine in their order, and four human cardinal virtues. There are seven principal virtues and seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Their field, nature, relationship and inter-action may be thus tabulated:

⁹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 2 ad 3; IIIa, q. 85, a. 6; Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, p. 138.



In these tables, the descending order amounts to a grading of the virtues from the most excellent, which is charity, down to the lowest, temperance. A more probable appraisal would locate hope in the third, rather than the second position.

The synopsis illustrates the important principles propounded by St. Thomas. On the road to heaven, to love God is better than merely to know him. Charity, therefore, is a more perfect virtue than faith. On the contrary, the knowledge of corporeal or material things on any inferior level is better than the love of them.

Among the theological virtues, faith exercises no moderating effect over the impulse of charity toward God; it merely unfolds the road map. Prudence, however, is one ruling cardinal virtue required by each of the remaining three.¹⁰ Prudence, which is defined as the use of right reason in behavior and in human action, is more perfect than the moral

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 82, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 66, a. 6 ad 1.

virtues which it balances and directs. Practical right reason is essentially identified with it. Virtues operating in the rational or sensitive appetites, in the will or sense potencies, can at best only participate in shares of right reason.

The function of prudence is to determine practical judgments and to regulate conduct in conformity with right desires and inclination. It is compatible with speculative error, when the error arises from ignorance that is entirely involuntary. Responsibility is not imputable on that score. The right aim or intention, even though materially refracted within one's horizon, makes prudence always practically true and morally certain. [To follow it is to act conscientiously.]¹¹

Question. It may be asked: How is it that prudence, which is inferior to the theological virtues, is somehow appealed to as if it were in command of them, to the extent of putting them into execution by the performance of definite, deliberate acts?

Reply. A distinction must be made between the virtues as spiritual entities and their manifestation through phenomena or exercise. Prudence cannot touch the spiritual acts or object of the theological virtues *per se*. It can bend them *per accidens*. Prudence can decide upon discipline, requiring human performances that embody particular subjective acts. It can regulate them according to environment. In changing circumstances, it can dictate. [For example: This is the moment for the profession of faith. Organize in defense of our motto: "In God we trust." These foreigners are worthy of your charity.]¹²

The distinction makes it clear why the theological virtues *per se* cannot be limited in their nature or object by any human average or standard. [Their consummation in charity is *ex toto*.] *Per accidens*, however, owing to the limitations of operators, their social and individual developments require prudence as a regulator. [Examples are available in religious rules and schedules, canonical appointments, and Catholic observances generally.]

¹¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 57, a. 5 ad 3.

¹² Cf. *Summa theol.*, q. 64, a. 4.

MISCELLANEOUS QUERIES

Comparison of the Theological with Other Virtues

THESE miscellaneous queries will consider general questions: 1) The kinship between theological and moral virtues. 2) Whether theological virtues consist in the golden mean. 3) Whether acquired moral virtues have any connection with charity. 4) The proportional relationship affecting equably all infused virtues making them grow apace like different parts of a single spiritual organism. 5) A comparison of the theological virtues with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. See *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, qq. 63–69.

First Query:

Is There a Comparison Between the Theological and the Moral Virtues?

St. Thomas furnishes a remarkable defense of the doctrine commonly held by theologians, to this effect: Besides personally acquired moral virtues a just man is adorned also with moral virtues that are *per se* infused, the denial of Scotus notwithstanding. Pope Innocent III wrapped up the common tradition of the learned in his answer to the inquiry as to whether "Faith, charity, and the other virtues were infused into children at baptism." His reply was affirmative. The doctrine was reinforced by the Council of Vienna.¹

In treating of sanctifying grace, the Roman Catechism observes: "It is followed by a most noble retinue of all the virtues which, with grace, are alike poured into the soul divinely."²

Aquinas offers theological proof for the existence of moral virtues *per se* infused. "Effects are necessarily proportioned to their causes and principles. God himself directly confers on us the theological virtues as our equipment for a supernatural end. But in the same way that nature's pre-existent principles of virtues develop the acquisition of intellectual and moral habits that are distinct virtues, so the divine infusion of theological virtues would not be complete for human needs without

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 63, aa. 3–4; Denz. 410, 483.

² *Roman Catechism*, II, chap. 2, par. 39.

a parallel accompaniment of intellectual and moral virtues, also infused." [Therefore, there are two sets of moral virtues: one, natural and acquired; the other supernatural and divinely infused.]

We are presenting the content of Article 3 of Question 63 in the Ia IIae of the *Summa*. The replies appended thereto insist that the disproportion between the virtues of the natural, contrasted with the supernatural order, is such that God himself must supply what nature cannot provide; namely, an independent equipment of intellectual and moral virtues, proportioned to the theological group, in which case the moral virtues, like the theological, would have to be infused.

The power of natural virtues cannot reach above the capacity of nature itself. But man's goal is formally supernatural, which entails the necessity of a perfection on man's part that can come only from special moral virtues, supernatural in themselves and not attainable except through an additional infusion on God's part.

Confirmation. God's providence is equally real and actual in the two orders of nature and grace. In the order of nature, man's rectitude is stabilized by the spontaneity of conscience: "Do what is right; shun what is wrong"—stimulated by the desire to pursue honest norms, in the attainment of nature's honorable end. The norms impel toward the application of acquired natural virtues in the use of natural means to that end.

In like manner, relative to the order of grace, the perfection of man is carried on, in view of his supernatural end, by infused theological virtues, sustained through other infused moral virtues bearing directly on the supernatural means, postulated by the supernatural end.

It is not enough for charity to employ moral virtues that have been acquired: (1) because in that case, the perfection of supernatural life would be worse off than the natural, to which alone acquired virtues are adapted; (2) because supernatural perfection demands that even the choosing of supernatural means should be a supernatural deed. There is no way out except to leave charity unhampered in its own sphere, and duly provided with freedom to use naturally acquired moral virtues through infused prudence and a full set of infused moral virtues in between.

The Angelic Doctor illustrates how having the double apparatus of infused and acquired moral virtues at the service of the theological works. What specifies infused moral virtues and makes them altogether different in their class from acquired moral virtues is their supernatural

object, their supernatural formal motive. They are proportioned and ordained to a supernatural end.³

There is a manifest difference between the way that reason adopts in exploiting one's tastes (as regulated by good form in the purely human practice of temperance, for example) and the higher way, according to divine law, pursued through a spirit of temperance infused.

In the use of nourishment, nature's dictate is this: "Go not so far as to injure the health of the body or hinder the right use of the mind." Supernatural or infused temperance focuses rather on keeping the body in restraint and on mastering its independent inclinations in conformity with a law that is divine. The body must be held in subjection by the soul, even to the extent of being punished through abstinence from food, drink, and other forms of self-indulgence.

A difference in species is the only explanation of these two perspectives. "What is verified in temperance, holds for both sets of the moral virtues," (natural and supernatural, acquired and infused). It is amiss to maintain that the infusion of moral virtues is only *per accidens*, as might be the pure figment of infused geometry.

Acquired moral virtues constitute the natural perfection of manhood. They cannot make man an "adopted son of God." There is a greater difference between acquired and infused temperance than there is between two musical notes going by the same name, yet separated from each other by a whole staff. Another comparison: Acquired temperance is like brass; infused temperance is like silver. To go further: The cleavage between Christian and philosophical temperance, frequently dwelt upon, is just as real as the distinction between religious poverty and the philosophical poverty of the [pagan] Crates. St. Thomas' comment is illuminating: "A variety in species brings it about that infused moral virtues equip men for the rank of 'fellow citizens with the saints and domestics of God' (Eph. 2:19); whereas the acquired virtues effect suitable adjustments about human things only."

Acquired moral virtue is an instrument of infused virtue. Its serviceableness is like that of the agile hands which a musician needs to prove the artistic discernment that is lodged in his practical reasoning faculty. Exterior skill in the exercise of virtue is furnished by acquired virtue, but its interior exercise is facilitated by infused moral virtue. Facility in outward performances involves the removal of impediments; but with regard to one's interior, the potency of virtue is so ready for action

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4.

through adaptability, that its proportionate strength becomes connatural and operates like a "second nature."

No wonder that a repentant sinner, restored to the state of grace, experiences difficulties and strong revulsion in the sensitive appetite, even after regaining the full set of infused moral virtues. Like the musician who drills his hands and fingers by the hour, he needs numerous rehearsals to get over the stiffness in joints and knuckles which the acquired virtues remedy.

Infused moral virtues are all possessed from the moment when supernatural charity is imparted to a soul through sacramental absolution. Attrition entitles a penitent to the benefit. The Angelic Doctor clarifies a pertinent case. When an intemperate man becomes contrite, the habit of intemperance vanishes. He is endowed with the contrary habit, or virtue, of infused temperance. What remains in his corrupted organism is a wayward inclination or disposition, [not a habit].⁴

Second Query:

Do Theological Virtues Agree with Moral Virtues by Consisting in the Golden Mean?

Following the *Ethics* of Aristotle (II, chap. 6) St. Thomas shows that moral virtues consist in a rational means; that is, in a measure determined by right reason in its appraisal of determinate matters. They act as a bridle for the appetites by controlling the will and the desires of sense. The rational mean lies always between the extremes of too much and too little. The excesses of intemperance and the defects of stolidity or stoicism, which are reducible to insensibility, are remedied by the virtue of temperance. Fortitude stands in-between reckless daring and cowardice. This peculiar character of the moral virtues is of a nature to require discernment and regulation of the sense appetites, such as is exercised through prudence, the driver or charioteer of the moral virtues. Prudence applies right reason in the doing of things and in personal behavior. But in the control of passion right reason varies, as is obvious in what it dictates for children and adults.

⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae*, "De Virtutibus in Communi," a. 10, ad 16. With regard to a complementary study of the material presented here, cf. the commentators on the *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 63, aa. 3-4.

The rational or golden mean serves as an axis and apex among and above opposing deviations. Its position is never to the right or to the left of a central field. Witness fortitude when it is on the increase. Infused fortitude rises above acquired fortitude with a mean of its own. The gift of fortitude soars still higher, since it qualifies for welcoming the special personal inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of a just and golden mean for moral virtues, therefore, must not be misconstrued as placing at a premium the deadening inertia of mechanical averages. Far from lapsing into tepid mediocrity, it lures to a height. It attracts the soul to mental and spiritual elevation.

Justice stands forth with a measure, rational to start out with, but objective and the same for all, with regard to its material sweep. It matches rights and things, independently of persons. Right engenders indebtedness ruled by an equality. If a hundred units are owed, a hundred units must be restored to one's creditor, by old or young to young or old indifferently. In commutative justice the equalization is objective between the value of the thing or property and the debt. In distributive justice the meter works uniformly but according to proportion—as when four degrees of merit gain ten points; and two degrees, five (the equalizing ratio being forty percent).

This assessment of values according to the thing involved (*medium rei*) is a requirement of the intellectual or speculative virtues also. In statements of what is and what is not—neither more nor less—truth demands correctness according to the objects discussed. Reason, rather than the thing itself, is the anchorage of prudence. Prudence regulates the other moral virtues, as virtues, prior to contacting external things.

Theological virtues, on the other hand, *per se* and objectively are not contracted by a golden mean. *Per accidens*, however, their exterior effects have to be, by reason of limitations bounding their finite subjects. God, in his infinitude, is the rule, regulator, and object of theological virtues—God, who cannot be transcended. He is Prime Truth for faith; he is Sovereign Might or Omnipotence for the help that makes hope firm; he is Supreme Goodness for charity.

Per se, therefore, and speaking objectively, we cannot have too much faith in God, nor too much hope, nor too much love for him. On our part, nevertheless, we are restricted by uncontrollable conditions through which the attainment of God is often frustrated by fascination for shadows and facsimiles. This happens by a neglect of duty, for example, in favor of "praying out of time"; by ignoring household obliga-

tions to gain freedom for contemplation; by extending one's faith to things not revealed; by hoping to be saved without a thought of working to merit it; by indulging charitable attitudes toward things that cannot be loved for God's sake. False charity of this sort might be boasted of as broad and liberal. In reality it is a humanizing preference that encroaches upon and minimizes the rights of God. [It paralyzes the spirit.] It is possible to love one's parents and fatherland under such a spell, to the detriment of duteness toward God. It is not possible, on the other hand, truly to love God too much or even enough, for he himself is greater than all praise, greater than all love.

Third Query:

Are Infused Moral Virtues Necessarily Connected with Charity?

St. Thomas upholds the common doctrine, Scotists opposing (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 1). Acquired morals, matured as virtues, are habits difficult to change. They hang together so firmly that, if any one of the moral virtues is missing, all the others forfeit their standing as perfect virtues.

There is no question here of moral virtues in the forming. These are only sprouting dispositions, easy to alter, such as: (1) happy, natural inclinations to be brave without meekness; (2) to keep temperate for utilitarian purposes, on the part of a miser; (3) drilling in any of the moral virtues that have not yet become reliable as habits.

Our theme is this: Genuine moral virtues once acquired and formally mature as virtues, are so inseparable that the loss of one entails the removal of all from the rank of virtue. Why?

The reason is this. There cannot be a moral virtue destitute of true prudence. Nor can the directive virtue, prudence, operate without the full equipment of true moral virtues. Prudence postulates an habitual rectitude in the human appetite matching the ends of the various virtues, and it dictates the means that must be actually applied to trends toward those ends. The practical judgment of prudence touching the just mean to be respected is not right if in concrete cases, chastity for instance, there is an absence of wholesomeness in one's desires and bent with regard to chaste proprieties. More than that, it is the function

of prudence to take over, to command and to demand recourse to means adapted to bring about an end definitely proposed. But no such procedure will work out, in default of a positive, right, and efficacious intention going before it, to reach a goal through the exercise of moral discipline or virtue as a whole.

From this it follows that there is a balance in the moral virtues in which they all share. Prudence is the fulcrum for this lever. As directive causes, the other moral virtues are steadied by it in a general way. As a dispositive cause, prudence sustains their equilibrium by controlling the practical judgment and originating the right dictates bearing on the means they utilize in securing an integral moral end. An axiom of Aristotle states: "The character of one's likes determines the nature of his choices." The preferences of an individual are all instinctively earmarked by the spontaneous inclination of his appetites. Voluntary or sensible—it makes no difference. This interaction between prudence and the moral virtues is causative; hence, they all form a compact unit through their connection in prudence.

A precautionary comment may be introduced from the *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 5 ad 3: In the practical intellect, where conscience scrutinizes, "truth is measured by its conformity with a mentally correct taste or appetite," even when ignorance, completely involuntary, hides a lack of conformity between the appetite and what it desires. The case is exemplified when one is invincibly deceived by another about the object of desire. It could happen in feigned hospitality. A small glass of wine is accepted by a guest through courtesy. Incidentally, he is without suspicion about an admixture of poison. Hospitality is a trick. The poisoned man succumbs without compromising the honesty fostered in his practical reason.⁵

A soldier addicted to lust is reputed to excel in the virtue of fortitude. That distinction is not merited, owing to the instability undermining the fixedness required by virtue as a habit. Through passion for a perfidious adulteress, he does not mind at times neglecting important military duties that test his fortitude. Similarly, a corrupt judge, open to bribing, is not any too strongly drawn toward justice for virtue's sake.

In the acquisition of virtues there are two stages: becoming virtuous, and then, actually being virtuous (*in fieri*, *in facto esse*). Once true prudence (which is poles away from the prudence of the flesh) has devel-

⁵ Cf. "De Speciali Certitudine Prudentiae," *Revue Thomiste* (1925), 341-55.

oped into an abiding virtue, it follows from the premises threshed out above, that all the other cardinal moral virtues are equally established with it.

Third query amplified. A new inquiry is in order. Are acquired moral virtues necessarily connected with charity or can they exist without it?

We are not dealing with infused moral virtues. They are inseparable from charity and figure as properties of sanctifying grace. If indeed faith and hope remain in many sinners devoid of charity, moral virtues may operate, but not meritoriously. Moreover, in the generative phase, faith and hope come before charity. In the scale of perfection, charity toward God as our ultimate supernatural end ranks ahead of all supernatural righteousness inherent in the will or in the rational appetite, although it is intent upon the use of supernatural means accommodated to that end. [Faith and hope must yield the first place in excellence to charity.]

What St. Thomas declares for the gentiles is everywhere true for all. Genuine moral virtues, so reputed because they are practiced most of the time, being only gradually acquired and strengthened, may keep growing as dispositions, without charity. As long as an accustomed degree of unreliability persists, they are not integral habits or virtues. To become such they need infused charity. How can it be otherwise? Man, without charity, is turned directly away from his last supernatural end. Indirectly, that status keeps him turned away from his natural end, the goal prescribed to be attained by natural law. By natural as well as supernatural law, obedience to God is obligatory—no matter what God commands—even on the highest levels.

But turn a man away from his last end, he turns through frailty toward evil, and the moral virtues he has acquired can never develop into the sturdy, inflexible habits which they ought to be. Nevertheless, they may go by the name of virtues because of their permanent tendency toward definite objects. In themselves, however, and in their human embodiment, like the corporeal envelope that contains them, they are dispositions susceptible to change. [Their metabolism varies between generation and corruption.] One mortal sin, in robbing a soul of charity, forces the whole equipment of acquired virtues to fall down to the level where gravitation marks out an inevitable road to corruption.⁶

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 2; q. 71, a. 4. A more detailed treatment by the author appeared in "The Instability of Acquired Moral Virtues in the State of Mortal Sin," *Revue Thomiste* (July-September, 1937).

Fourth Query:

The Proportional Equality Between the Virtues and Their Duration

In the matter of comparison St. Thomas keeps to the obvious. He holds that no two infused virtues are equal. The infusion, however, is a unified and unifying energy that keeps them all related and bound together so intimately that they grow interlaced and become uniform, through a proportional equality. Theological and infused moral virtues alike are comparable in this respect to fingers [one set related to the left hand thumb, prudence; the other to the right thumb, charity; and both hands clasped].

The organic life of sanctifying grace guarantees the matching called *proportional equality*. Infused virtues are its properties. The equalization, [a more or less fixed ratio] is their formal efficient. Materially speaking, however, men taken singly, with due regard to their individuality and accustomed activities, develop characteristics which diversify them through variable degrees of alertness and skill in the practice of one virtue more than another.

Through Eucharistic Communion, the increase of charity brings with it a proportionate increase in all infused virtues and in the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, as inseparable accompaniments.

The subordinate class of acquired moral virtues receive a further increase, incidentally as it were, whenever the higher infused virtues grow through uses called *ex opere operantis*,—through the deeds of the possessor. It is like the nimbleness of the fingers that goes on increasing the more a musician progresses in the cultivation of his practical intellect through the discerning refinements of art. [The skill of an artist rooted in his mind is manifested chiefly in his touch.]

As for the duration of virtues, charity never falls away (cf. 2 Cor. 13:8). Faith and hope do; they vanish into vision. Until that moment faith is concerned with things not yet seen; and hope is concerned with objects not yet possessed. The moral virtues are moved entirely out of their material field. In the next world, all "former things are gone, particularly those which come under the management of the moral virtues."

Thus, the sociable delights of feasting and venery are regulated by temperance; dangers to human life are offset by fortitude; and exchanges of properties and the distribution of commodities are con-

trolled by justice. The formal spirit of each moral virtue, however, will survive in the heavenly fatherland through a rectification of human desiring toward objects that are in perfect conformity to reason and divine law.

Fifth Query:

Comparison of the Theological Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

The gifts of the Holy Ghost have been dwelt upon widely in the Old and New Testaments since the days of Isaias (8th Cent. B.C.). Isaias was the author of the classical enumeration: On the Messiah "shall rest the Spirit of the Lord: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety and he shall be fill with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. 11:2-3).

A selection of cognate texts, interspersed with traditional interpretations is here offered:⁷ "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful" (Wis. 1:5); "The spirit of wisdom came upon me" (Wis. 7:7); "In wisdom is the spirit of understanding" (Wis. 7:22); "All gold in comparison is a pinch of sand and silver a lump of clay" (Wis. 7:9). Wisdom, as a mother and wife, is praised for nursing, nourishing, and clothing the soul that fears God (cf. Sir. 15:1-2, 5; 39:8).

Christ the first Paraclete, promised to "ask the Father" to send "another" (Jn. 14:16), "The Spirit of truth" who would "teach all truth" and keep the apostles aware of whatever Christ had said (Jn. 16:13-14). The Spirit would serve as "hidden manna" to Apocalyptic victors (Ap. 2:7). Meanwhile all Christians are like the Romans: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: 'Abba, Father. . . . The Spirit asks for us with unspeakable groanings'" (Rom. 8:15, 26).

Both Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church have been drawn to treat of the Holy Spirit's gifts. Outstanding among them are Sts. Augustine⁸ and Gregory the Great.

⁷ The texts given here are assembled by A. Gardeil in *Dictionnaire Catholique*, article "Dons." Other correlated texts are: 1 Cor. 2:12; Gal. 4:6; 5:16 ff.; Eph. 1:13, 17; 3:16; Phil. 4:7. For supplementary matter, see Touzard, "Les Sept. Dons," *Revue Biblique* (April, 1899), pp. 232 ff.

⁸ Cf. St. Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount* (Mt. chap. 5); cf. also, sermons 248 and 249.

Pope Damasus, in the Roman Synod of 382 A.D., reinforces the gifts one by one (cf. Denz. 83). Not long ago Pope Leo XIII appealed to them.⁹ They sparkle in the liturgy of Pentecost as a "sacred septenary"—*Sacro septenario*.

The Angel of the Schools indicates the difference between infused virtues and the gifts [which are also infused]. The gifts dispose the receiver to keep in readiness to move promptly at the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in a manner superior to human influences. Infused virtues enlighten the recipient to act on a lower level—in a human manner, but through faith.

The distinction grows patent from the consideration of Christian prudence, whose method is serious and discursive; it is in contrast with the gift of counsel, which keeps the soul pliant, docile, and flexible in view of superior actuation in the form of interior, divine motion.

Similarly, faith, which of itself adheres to mysteries revealed, differs completely from the gift of understanding. When the latter is infused, it impregnates a disposition to penetrate the mysteries of faith in conjunction with the Holy Ghost, and to foster for them a special relish issuing from the parental gift of wisdom. The special inspiration that brings this about, in the case of all seven gifts, is welcomed with docility [bereft of impulsiveness]. And yet, like an actual grace, only more strongly, it moves one efficaciously, while exercising a superior directive and regularizing influence from above.

A superhuman instrument of the kind serves the purpose of a rule in the development of superhuman conduct. Being a rule, it ranks above the formal motive of the acts ensuing from the gifts. It is also superior to the formal motives of the virtues, even when they are infused.

The seven gifts are to a soul what seven sails would be to a boat. A boat may be rowed with oars. Its progress then depends upon the labor of the oarsmen. In the spiritual order, the virtues are oars. Greater speed and comfort follow from favorable winds blowing into the sails. With beginners, the sails are in a sense tied up, through the half-conscious or careless repetition of venial sins. In perfect souls the sails are fully spread out, in order to propel easily and quickly at the blowing of every gust of wind.

[There are eight articles in question 68, which St. Thomas devotes to the seven gifts (*Summa Ia IIae*). Up to the present our subject matter

⁹ Encyclical, *Divinum illud munus*, May 9, 1897.

has covered the first article. The author here summarizes the remaining seven.—Tr.]

Art. 2. The gifts are shown to be a necessity for salvation. Without them, "human reason, even when enlightened by faith, cannot keep universally alert in repelling the influence of folly, ignorance, obtuseness, harshness and the like. That is why the gifts of the Holy Spirit, by implanting in souls an instinct of God, are seen to supply a remedy for these deficiencies."

Art. 3. The gifts are infused habits permanently anchored in the just man. They bear the same relationship to the Holy Ghost as do the moral virtues to right reason. The Holy Ghost inspiring functions as director in person. He actuates a freely docile subject into movements of his own, in somewhat the same way that an attentive pupil, "all eyes and ears" catches whatever the master passes along from the rostrum. Another illustration is that of an obedient subject who is always happy to make a superior's will his own by carrying it out.

Art. 4. Seven gifts, a "sacred septenary." Not all sources agree with the Vulgate by including piety among the gifts listed in Isaias. Apostolic doctrine, however, is ingrained with it. Piety is the spirit described by St. Paul as that of "adoption, moving the sons of God" impelling them to "cry 'Abba,' Father" (Rom. 8:15, 26; Gal. 4:6).

Four of the seven gifts are in the intellect, namely: wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge. Three are administered in the will, to which the sensitive appetite is subordinated. They are fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. The most eminent gift is wisdom, the greatest of the seven gifts, outranking the other six.

It is through the gift of wisdom that the Holy Spirit's action delivers inspiration and propels or directs the other gifts in a way comparable to the sway of charity over all other virtues.

There is a correspondence between the gifts and the virtues. The supreme gift of wisdom matches the supreme virtue, charity. Faith derives assistance from the gifts of knowledge and understanding. Hope is safeguarded against presumption by the gift of filial fear. Religion gains in perfection through the gift of piety, prudence through the gift of counsel, fortitude through the gift bearing the same name, and temperance through God-fearingness.

Art. 5. All the gifts focus in charity, since the Holy Ghost their originator "dwells in us through charity" (Rom. 5:5). All seven gifts grow

along with charity and the other infused virtues. They belong to a spiritual organism in its superior functioning, which consists in receiving well the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Art. 6. The gifts of the Holy Ghost remain in heaven, where their subjects are totally subdued to God, by reason of consummate experimental knowledge of God and most perfect filial affection for him.

Art. 7. The grading of the gifts according to excellence governs the descending order listed in Isaias (11:2). Top excellence accounts for the gift of wisdom coming first. The gift of filial fear comes last since it is the "beginning of wisdom," which unfolds progressively through the other seven stages reversed (cf. Ps. 110:10; Sir. 1:16).

Art. 8. The gifts have a rating above the moral virtues for the simple reason that it is a more perfect excellence to be moved by the Spirit of God than by reason, even though reason has grown luminous through faith.

But the theological virtues take precedence over the gifts, since they effect union with the Holy Ghost in the process of inspiring. Indeed, the seven gifts cannot promote perfection unless the accomplishment of all they do proceeds in line with faith, hope, and charity.

It is the doctrine of St. Gregory the Great that acts issuing from the gifts are regulated remotely by a living faith, and proximally by the special inspiration furnished through the correlated gift.

Although, absolutely speaking, the gifts are inferior to the theological virtues, nevertheless, from a particular angle, they contribute to their perfection. A good illustration lies in the gift of understanding. Through its penetration of the mysteries of faith, it ameliorates the living faith that occasions it.

It is like horticulture. A tree is more perfect than its fruit; and yet, it is in the fruit that the trees' perfection matures. It is better to own a fruitbearing tree than the fruit without the tree.

Aquinas pushes the comparison of gifts and virtues in general on to a more detailed examination of their relationship, when analyzing the virtues one by one. Understanding and knowledge share his attention when treating of faith. And his treatise on charity winds up with the gift of wisdom. We shall not anticipate here.

Beatitudes. A brief sketch of the relations coordinating the theological virtues with the beatitudes is pertinent here. It is a key concept in the Gospel and exquisitely beautiful (cf. Mt. 5). It can be found in the

position Ia IIae, q. 69, of the *Summa theologiae*. We single out in the four articles of that question certain very salient features bearing on our topic.

Art. 1. The beatitudes are a portrayal of accustomed deeds, characterizing the higher virtues, insofar as the said virtues are perfected by the gifts. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution. . . ." This, the fourth among the beatitudes deals with heroism as a degree of the virtue of fortitude enhanced by the gift of fortitude.

Art. 2. Each beatitude bespeaks merit and reward beginning on earth and consummated in heaven: "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."

Art. 3. St. Matthew gives the beatitudes in ascending order, marking, as it were, successive measures of departure from sin: "Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . . Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed are they who mourn." Positive headway in the active life begins to take shape: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice. . . . Blessed are the merciful." The contemplative life springs forth: "Blessed are the clean of heart. . . . Blessed are the peacemakers."

The eighth beatitude, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake," crystallizes the first seven and intensifies them through a new title to additional merit: persecution. The beatitudes are a sort of Jacob's ladder, ascending in their own way and matching the list of gifts in Isaiah, which are descending. The topmost gift, wisdom, corresponds with the topmost single beatitude, peacemaking.

Art. 4. The rewards in which the beatitudes culminate are themselves ascending. They mount up to the vision of God and divine sonship. (Mt. 5:9, 10, 12.)

Supplement. The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost listed by St. Paul (cf. Gal. 5:22-23)—Charity joy, peace, etc.—have reference to good works done through the grace of the Holy Spirit and thoroughly relished in the performance. They grow out of the infused virtues and gifts combined.

All the beatitudes are fruits, but not all fruits are beatitudes. Some fall short of them in excellence (continency, for example). Merely continent people may still have much to suffer from rebellious flesh.

All fruits of the Holy Ghost result from "walking in the Spirit" by not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16-17). Spirit and flesh are contraries.¹⁰

* ¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 70.

Our general treatment of the theological virtues terminates here. It was necessary for our purposes to outline sufficiently their kinship with other virtues, with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with the evangelical beatitudes, for the rewards at stake in their beginnings here on earth mature in happiness that is eternal.¹¹ We are now in position to take up the theological virtues singly.

¹¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 69, a. 2.

THE
THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE
OF FAITH

(*Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, qq. 1–16)

Introduction and Division of the Tract on Faith

(*Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, qq. 1-16)

IN THE PERSPECTIVE of St. Thomas, the background of morality is diversified by many factors subordinated to man's last end and the ways and means that lead thereto. Moral discipline progresses through responsible procedures called human acts. For such acts to be correctly appraised, one's judgment must be based on correct principles and operate with clear notions concerning virtues and vices in general, and concerning law and grace.

Having paved the general way safely in the *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, Aquinas now begins the IIa IIae with a treatment of each virtue in particular. First, the virtue is expounded definitively. Then it is considered in its relationship with the corresponding gift of the Holy Ghost; in its contrast with the opposite vices, their excesses and deficiencies; and finally, with reference to Mosaic and ecclesiastical precepts protecting the various virtues.

The full impact of God's commandments is not grasped without a perception of the correlative virtues established in the light of their specifying object. For this reason, moral theology is more systematically divided according to the virtues, prior to the precepts. Both virtues and precepts are concerned with the same material—vices also; virtues, however, are constructive, whereas vices are wrong and destructive.

We have shown previously that all virtues are reduced to seven, namely, three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity; plus four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. The virtue of religion, intent upon the cult or exercises of worship due to God, is annexed, as a department, to justice, the virtue impelling toward giving everyone his rights. Numerous other virtues are related to fortitude and temperance.

Theological virtues are entitled to be treated before the moral virtues because they directly concern man's last end. As a mental target, the last end is the first thing to be chosen and aimed at. It is one's main intention, in view of which available means are requisitioned, chosen, and utilized.

In asceticism, which is the branch of theology dealing with the at-

tainment of one's end, the purgative life demands attention first. It is through the deliberate cultivation of penitence and the moral virtues that growth begins and advances toward the adult age of the spirit in which the excellence of the theological virtues unfolds.

After the theological virtues, speculative moral theology takes up the cardinal virtues as governing the means subordinated to man's last end. First in order comes prudence, the director of all the others. Under the head of prudence, St. Thomas presents many considerations with which beginners are familiarized early in treatises on conscience.

As a matter of fact, conscience functioning rightly and with certitude is a norm developing identically under the action of prudence. It is suitable, therefore, on the threshold of moral theology, to insist in general that morality be based on undoubting conscientiousness, thoroughly righteous. But the formation of conscience that makes this possible is systematically expounded under prudence.

In treating of prudence professedly, its identity is defined by the determination of its formal object and the nature of its certitude. Its perfection depends on its conformity with rightful desires in the subjective appetite. It does not bar invincible speculative error [as when one graciously accepts hospitality only to be betrayed into drinking poison].

The cardinal and annexed virtues follow the theological virtues, which they serve as handmaids. As for the intellectual virtues—wisdom, understanding, and knowledge—St. Thomas treats of them conjointly with the supernatural gifts, bearing respectively the same names: wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

Moral theology is a unit. Its totality requires the treatment of special states of life. Diverse states are characterized by corresponding graces. Thaumaturgic states connote the gift of prophecy or other special graces styled *gratis datae*. More ordinary is the distinction between contemplative and active states; more outstanding is the permanent differentiation of the two states of perfection, that of bishops and that of religious.

This ground is covered by St. Thomas toward the end of the IIa IIae, question 171. The treatises are concise and complete from the angle of science. Moral theology, like all sciences, has its own field and it embraces in that field all factors that are related to it; *per se*. Science is not preoccupied with what turns out *per accidens*.

If, following the pattern of Aquinas, we are questioned as to why

faith engages us first among the theological virtues instead of the higher virtue charity, we volunteer a comment touching the divisional hierarchy of the virtues.

Nothing is desired without being known about in advance. Faith shows the way. Through faith the intellect takes hold of the ultimate supernatural end. The ultimate end is simultaneously the object of hope and of charity. The order is one of generation in percepts: faith sees; hope seeks; charity loves through union. Faith, therefore, comes first. Hope intervenes, passing from promises and gifts to the Giver. Charity comprehends sovereign Good in its infinitude.

The treatise on faith has four parts. The initial topic is the object of faith, since all virtues are specified by their object.

Treatise on Faith	Faith itself	Its formal specifying object and its conditions.....		Q. 1
		Acts of faith	interior	Q. 2
			exterior	Q. 3
		What they specify	Habit or virtue of faith	in itself
				The believers
				Efficient cause of faith.....
				Effects of faith.....
				or the acts commanded by faith. (Acts elicited, treated elsewhere.)
		Gifts	Understanding	Q. 4
				Q. 5
		Opposing Vices	Knowledge	Q. 6
				Q. 7
				Q. 8
				Q. 9
		Precepts	Infidelity, heresy, apostasy from the faith.....	Qq. 10, 11, 12
				Blasphemy in general and the blasphemy which is a sin against the Holy Ghost.....
				Spiritual blindness opposed to the gift of understanding.....

Explanation of the Table

The first part of the treatise from the *Summa* deals directly with faith itself, considered as related to four causes: (1) the formal cause, which is the formal object specifying it; (2) two things sharing in the specification, viz., the act and habit of faith considered formally. Herein the final cause is introduced. Since the theological virtues have to do with the last end, their object coincides with the last end. [I believe God, on God, in God, and through God.]

Later on, the (3) material cause is discerned in the believers and the (4) efficient cause in God who infuses faith.¹

This arrangement runs parallel with that of the treatises on hope and charity. It is quite important to realize that the Angel of the Schools always starts out by riveting attention on the object of the virtues.

If, in the treatment of charity, it seems otherwise at first sight to those who read the titles—because the nature of charity is mentioned before its object—let them reflect. St. Thomas' inquiry as to whether charity is friendship, in Article I (IIa IIae, q. 23), is itself an investigation of the specifying object. The friendship envisaged is bestowed upon God, and on him alone, by the lover, as its formal and ultimate object. Hence, the definition of charity is love tendered to God as a friend.² It is the method regularly employed by St. Thomas, to begin the treatment of the virtues by studying their object first.

QUESTION ONE

The Object of Faith

Introduction

As a mere name, faith may be understood in many ways. John of St. Thomas indicates six senses that are expressed in Holy Writ. Four have reference to the intellect and two to the will.

1. Faith is a habit or act of the understanding, in virtue of which we give assent to truth as accepted on the authority of a witness. Such

¹ We are omitting St. Thomas' article entitled "Whether Faith is Real," owing to the abundant proof of its reality contained in Aquinas' exposition of the three theological virtues expounded in our introductory treatise (*Summa*, Ia IIae q. 62).

² Cf. John of St. Thomas, beginning of his treatise on charity.

faith is either human or divine, according as the witness is man or God. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is stated on God's authority that "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that do not appear" (Heb. 11:11). Divine faith of the kind is the theological virtue which concerns us.

2. Faith is synonymous with the object of faith; that is to say, with the body of divine mysteries, so well illustrated in the Symbol of St. Athanasius: "This is Catholic faith. Unless the man of faith holds to it firmly, he cannot be on the road to salvation." The following is an example from Scripture: "Thou hast not denied my faith" (Ap. 2:13).

3. Faith may also signify conscience as the tribunal supervising human activities. In this sense, "Whatever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). The context is explanatory. No kind of food is in itself unclean, yet no Christian should eat what scandalizes his neighbor or runs against his own conscience (cf. Rom. 14:20, 22).

4. Faith may designate a promise which, the same as a vow, pertains to the intellect. St. Augustine, expounding these words of St. Paul: "They have made void their first faith" (1 Tim. 5:12), asks: "What do they mean?" The offenders "took a vow and broke it"—they failed to keep their word. The preceding four senses of the word faith are related to the understanding. The remaining two pertain to the will.

5. Faith is interchangeable with fidelity, a virtue of the will which brings about constancy in carrying out promises. The matter will be considered under Question 109. We borrow an illustration from St. Paul to the Romans: "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid. God is true and every man lies" (Rom. 3:4).

6. Faith is also construed as trust or confidence, as in the counsel of James: "Ask in faith, not wavering" (Jas. 1:6). It is a condition for praying: "O you of little faith, why are you fearful?" (Mt. 8:26.) It is a kind of robust hope as St. Thomas shows.¹

The early Protestants extolled this peculiar form of faith or confidence, maintaining its efficiency for spiritual justification; in other words, he who possesses it may be certain that his sins are forgiven. The contention was condemned as heresy by the Council of Trent: "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies, let him be anathema."²

It is common Protestant usage to write "confidence" when Catholics write "faith," signifying thereby nothing beyond the mere natural reli-

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 129, a. 6.

² Denz. 822.

gious sense shared in common by all religions. We shall see in due course that theological faith resides in the intellect. Confidence is a different virtue allied with hope; its seat is in the will.

In the divisions of Question 1, on the object of faith, St. Thomas offers ten articles, which constitute what we here present as three parts of the present investigation.

Part One. The first part bears on the formal and material object of faith. It coincides with the first article of Aquinas. The formal object *quo* is divine Truth revealing. All that is thus revealed is the material object of faith. God himself is the first thing revealed; all else revealed is related to him as revealer and revealed. God himself is the combined formal and material objects, *quo* and *quod*, of faith.

Part Two. The second part deals with the conditions of the object, in seven articles numbered 2 to 8. The entire series is rooted in the first of the seven; that is, in Article 2.

Article 2. Divine truth in itself is most simple; but it has to be grasped by us as complex, after the manner of a proposition, to be expressed in fractional terms.

Article 3. Divine truth is infallible in what it reveals. Therefore, there can be nothing false underlying faith.

Article 4. The object of faith is unseen. It is not directly evident in itself. Its believableness, however, is evident.

Article 5. The object of faith is a thing not really known in itself, nor even indirectly evident. It cannot be demonstrated from natural principles.

Article 6. An object of faith is divisible into certain articles, diversified according to given difficulties, obscurities, or mysteries.

Article 7. The multiplication of articles ensues; not because of any substantial division in the thing taught but only for convenience in explaining its various phases.

Article 8. There are fourteen articles of faith, two groups of seven each, relating to the Godhead and to Christ's humanity, respectively.

Part Three. The third part, concerning the declaration of faith's object, closes the series with two articles.

Article 9. The object of faith is set forth infallibly by the Church in its symbols or creeds (for example, in the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Creed of Constantinople).

Article 10. Any new edition of the Creed requires the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, the same as do all the other things affecting the Church as a whole.

In these ten articles are rounded out in unity all things belonging *per se* to the object of faith.

Before undertaking the explanation of the first article in the preceding list, it is expedient to resume in outline Aquinas' doctrine we have advanced (Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 1,) touching the existence of the theological virtues.

In Sacred Scripture, they are emphasized as revealed over and over again. There is no mistaking them—from the general embodiment in the book of Sirach: "You who fear the Lord, believe him . . . hope in him . . . love him" (Sir. 2:8-10), on to the Pauline refinement: "These three remain, faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of them is charity" (1 Cor. 13:13).

Tradition discerns, with unanimity, an analysis and grading of the theological virtues in St. Paul's spirit, that places faith in the foreground as preliminary to hope and charity. For a supernatural object to be desired, it must first be known supernaturally. The priority of charity is one of dignity, declared as a subsequent development of greatness in excellence, issuing forth from faith and hope as seeds planted and sprouting.

The theological reasoning which bolsters up the necessity of the theological virtues is this: By the exercise of virtue, man is put in shape to reach supernatural beatitude.³ Now it is to supernatural beatitude, over and above natural beatitude, that man is destined. St. Peter describes the situation. Through Christ "you are made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pt. 1:4). Therefore, for the supernatural beatitude apportioned to man, the particular virtues classified as theological are required. They alone have God as their peculiar supernatural object or goal. Only God infuses them. He alone can, for in the premises a supernatural goal postulates a supernatural operation, if it is to be reached.

The whole procedure can be known only by divine revelation. The detection of the supernatural character of the theological virtues has to be on the level with the virtues themselves. The manifestation of things is always matched by the truth about them, in grading as well as in kind, since being and truth—*ens et verum*—are mutually convertible terms.

This first demonstration is characteristic of the theological virtues only. The two arguments that follow bear also and equally on infused

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 1; q. 3, a. 5.

moral virtues. The theological virtues are essentially supernatural; this is not true of the infused moral virtues. That is why they cannot be possessed and why there is no mold in nature that can form them, until God infuses them in their totality.

It is vain, therefore, to object that such immediate intervention on God's part is unnecessary, on the grounds that human faith, hope, and charity would do; that theological virtues merely bridge over our first beginning and last end by uniting us to both; and for that purpose, the reasoning faculty and will are enough. The faculties do not need to be supplemented by special habits or particular virtues. We emerged from our first creative principle and we tend toward our ultimate end, consistently knowing whither we go and proceeding deliberately by the use of reason and will.

St. Thomas crystallizes this objection (Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 3 ad 3) and replies: Natural reason and will may serve as directives, from beginning to end, of any course within the horizon of pure nature and never beyond the proportions circumscribed by nature. It is quite another thing when the goal or object, supernatural beatitude, is out of all proportion with nature, rising above and lying beyond all natural boundaries. Reason and will get shortcircuited in trying to attain it unaided.

The answer involves a distinction in favor of which Thomists are prepossessed. God is the author of nature and the author of grace. He is also nature's end, which is not the same thing as being the supernatural ultimate. The objection leaves no room for the supernatural order at any point nor for its union with anything at any time.⁴

The necessity of three theological virtues follows from the insufficient nature of the intellect and will. First, the intellect needs the guidance of supernatural principles, emanating from a light that is divine. Faith furnishes it. Secondly, the will-action has two phases. It must tend definitely toward an attainable end hard to reach. It is the function of hope to impel it. Ulteriorly, it strives for union, effected in some degree or other through a transformation into its end; and this is the work of charity. Charity is higher than the other theological virtues. It gives them form and supernatural vitality. He who loves God is bound to believe in him more firmly and to trust in him more ardently just because he loves.

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 1 ad 3; *Quaestiones disputatae; De virtutibus in communi*. [The difficulty unlocked by this key is incorporated from a footnote of the author.—Tr.]

Article 1

Is the Object of Faith Prime Truth?

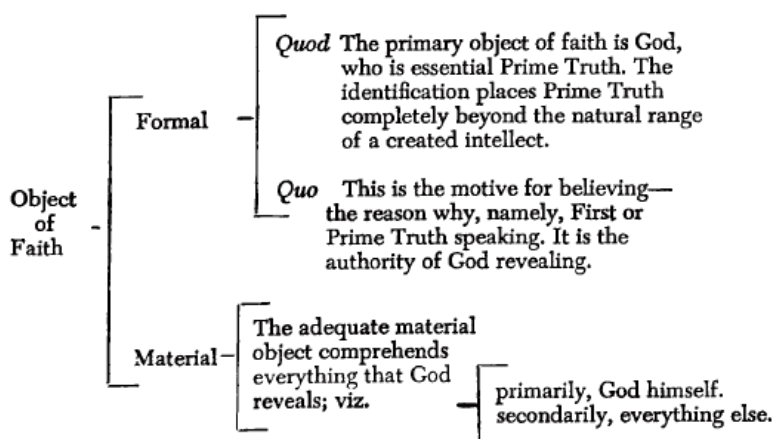
(IIa IIae, Question I)

By First Truth, which we are designating Prime Truth, is signified supreme or divine truth, first and highest in the order of dignity. Objections to an unrestricted affirmative answer seem to have a backing in three considerations:

1) The truths proposed for our belief are manifold. They affect Christ's humanity, as well as God who is Prime Truth. They also embrace the Church and the condition of creatures. 2) Faith extends to the whole content of Sacred Scripture. By that very fact it embraces a multitude of things about creatures. 3) Just as by charity we love God and the neighbor, so by faith we reach numerous things besides Prime Truth.

On the authority of Dionysius, however, we affirm the following: Faith is concerned with simple truth whose existence is never interrupted. Prime Truth alone corresponds to that description.

The solution of Aquinas contains three conclusions that may be tabulated thus:



This particular article of St. Thomas looks easy enough; yet, for seven

centuries it has led to prolific, if not interminable, discussions. The matter is difficult.⁵ It divides militant ranks as follows:

Thomists stand firm, as against Scotus, the nominalists, Molina, Lugo and their adherents. Suárez is aligned with the Thomists.⁶ At the heart of the controversy is this axiom of Aquinas: "The species of any habit whatever depends upon the formal character of the object. Efface that, and there is no measure left for specifying habits." The Thomists and Suárez are strong for the axiom, but it is denied by their opponents.

As a result, the Thomists maintain that faith, *per se* infused, is specified by its formal object *quo* and *quod*, and the said object is essentially supernatural. No acquired human faith can touch it, even when professedly founded on the evidence of miracles, as happens in the case of demons.⁷

For St. Thomas, faith is essentially supernatural in being infused *per se* and not *per accidens*, because it is specified by a formal object that is essentially supernatural and inaccessible within the range of nature. The formal object is attained to in a supernatural manner, without an intermediary.

The position of Scotus, Durandus, and Molina is glued to the tenet that the formal motive of faith can be known through natural means. De Lugo and his followers think that our infused faith is itself discursive, having for its basis two truths that are naturally knowable. The first is: God speaks truth and cannot deceive; the second: God speaks through the Gospel and the Church, invigorating his words with miracles. Although this pair of truths is naturally knowable, De Lugo comments: "As a matter of fact, God designed that faith should be a norm of supernatural merit. In view of that purpose, his concurrence with the act of faith is not natural but supernatural."⁸

But if that is the case, Thomists cannot help pointing out incongruities. First, infused faith ceases to be supernatural in its substance. There is nothing supernatural to it, save in the manner of its production. It is reduced to a natural habit infused, as it were, *per accidens*, no better in itself than infused geometry might be.

Secondly, the supernatural certitude of faith is no more. It suc-

⁵ The historic discussions are expounded in *De Revelatione* (4th edition, 1945, p. 427). There we reply to the inquiry: How can one discern Revelation as the formal motive of infused faith? Cf. the first edition (1918), I, pp. 458-515.

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, (4th edition), p. 490.

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2.

⁸ *De Fide*, disp. IX, sect. I, 20, cited in *De Revelatione*, I, 494; 1945 edition, pp. 450 ff.

cumbs to an inferior brand of certitude, purely rational, regarding the very existence of the miracles that are alleged to confirm the Church's doctrine.

Thirdly, there would be nothing left to do but join De Lugo in declaring that the formal motive of faith lies in the fact that what Holy Church proposes for Christian belief, has been confirmed by miracles. How far indeed is such rationalizing of ecclesiastical faith from the standard of Aquinas who teaches that the formal object of faith is uncreatable. It is nothing less than uncreated Prime Truth.

For Thomists, Prime Truth is the triune God in His essence. This is worlds away from De Lugo's dissolution of faith into what Thomists show belongs exclusively within the domain and under the control of natural reason. The first principles of reason applied humanly to the historical Gospel adorned with miracles, consistently generate nothing beyond a human faith.⁹

Billot discards De Lugo's theory of discursive faith, yet he is one with Scotus, the nominalists, and Molina, whom he cites, in sustaining that the motive of infused faith lies within the reach of acquired faith, in the same way that the formal motive of infused geometry would be within the range of acquired geometry. A statement like that ignores the important distinction that geometry would be infused only *per accidens*, whereas Christian faith is infused *per se*.

Cardinal Billot writes in express terms: "Supernatural habits are not necessarily distinguished from natural habits according to their objects, but according to a suitability growing out of participation in the life of grace; in other words, being in the state of sanctifying grace."¹⁰ How can such an explanation be reconciled with the axiom above, taken word by word from Aquinas: "The species of any habit depends on the formal character of its object. Take that away and there is no reason left for specifying."

Nevertheless, Billot respects and apparently recurs to St. Thomas (Ia IIae q. 54, a. 2): "Habits are specifically distinguished according to a suitability of their nature." Yet, a habit need not be essentially in agreement with the grace from which it is derived, unless, at the same time, it is specified by a supernatural object. Otherwise, its matching with grace would be only *per accidens*.

Now Aquinas is far from saying that a habit essentially supernatural

⁹ The author's tabulation in a footnote is comprised in this paragraph.—Tr.

¹⁰ Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis* (1905), p. 84.

can receive its specification from any object that is naturally accessible. His conviction is quite opposite. Habits are specified by the double supernatural formal objects (*quo* and *quod*) and at the same time according to their adaptability or inadaptability to nature. His line of reasoning is clear.

Among good habits some are suitable to human nature, like acquired wisdom or philosophy, others have a suitableness to the elevation of grace; such is infused faith. Among bad habits, some are repulsive and so vicious as to be against nature. Others, like hatred of God, antagonize grace. Despair and infidelity belong to the last group. It is impossible to separate the specification determined by kinship with grace from the specification furnished by a supernatural formal object. Those are but two phases of an identical specification. Infused faith is a habit of this kind. The whole reason for its correspondence with uplifting grace is its relationship with a formal supernatural object to start out with.

As Aquinas teaches, the principal specification originates in the object necessarily. Motion derives its specification from the destination. For example, in traveling, [at Chicago terminals, tickets are purchased for New York, Washington, New Orleans, and San Francisco trains. Chicago is a starting point; it does not specify the outgoing trains; the destinations do].¹¹

By comparison, the intellect and will, belonging to a spiritual soul, are themselves spiritual. But the intellect is the soul's way to truth; the will, to goodness. Each faculty is specified by a characteristic object terminatively.

The stumbling block for theologians since the days of St. Thomas has been this problem. Is the formal motive of infused faith naturally knowable? Is it naturally known? Or does it have to be supernaturally believed, together with all revealed mysteries, over and above what the "evidences of credibility" warrant, by the bare rational consideration of manifold signs accompanying revelation?

In undertaking to solve the difficulty according to the principles of Aquinas, it is necessary to expound two factors which the Holy Doctor takes for granted. The first is bound up with the true distinction that

¹¹ The author envisages a walk in Rome from the Angelicum to the Vatican and not to the Coliseum. The Vatican specifies the walk. American scenes are more familiar.—Tr.

exists between two kinds of objects, formal and material. The second is the division of truth, justifying the name Prime or First Truth.

Definitions. Terms assumed up to the present to be known by usage, must now be clarified according to the *Summa theologiae*.¹²

The object of a potency or habit may be either material or formal. There are two kinds of formal objects: they are named *quod* and *quo*.

The material object of a potency or habit embraces everything within the scope of its concern.

The formal object *quod* is of itself and on its own account the chief aim to be attained. It is the principal end, on account of which all other aims have their worth and nature as collateral or subordinate.

The formal object *quo*, rendered also *sub quo*, is an intermediary for the attainment of the material object and especially the formal object *quod*.

For a physician, health is the unvarying formal object *quod*. [Doses to procure it belong to the formal object *quo*. Everything pertaining to the care of the patient, nursing and treatments in general and in particular, constitute the *material* object.]

In every realm of knowledge, the illustrations run parallel. For example:

Sight	Material object: everything visible. Formal <i>quod</i> : color Formal <i>quo</i> : light
Physics	Material object: sensible things. Formal <i>quod</i> : matter and motion. Formal <i>quo</i> : the light of reason in the first degree of abstraction.
Mathematics	Material object: any sensible thing Formal <i>quod</i> : quantity Formal <i>quo</i> : light of reason in the second degree of abstraction
Metaphysics	Material object: ens, being, and beings. Formal <i>quod</i> : the precise aspect of being as being. Formal <i>quo</i> : light of reason in the third degree of abstraction.

¹² Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 1, a. 3; q. 77, a. 3; Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2 ad 1.

The formal object *quo* is called by St. Thomas the formal reason (*ratio formalis*) or *raison-d'être* of an object. It is also described as the "reason through which a thing is known." In science it is a discerning reason (*ratio sciendi*), or a middle term, the mean term in demonstration. The three Latin forms herein match: *ratio essendi, sciendi, cognoscendi*.

What is of importance here is that the formal object *quo* is immediately reached by a habit and an act which are specified by it. If it were not, then some other object would have to intervene with its corresponding habit and act, which would thereupon become a formal object *quo*. [This wedge could develop an indefinite series.]

For example, sensible light is perceived directly by sight without any other medium. Similarly, the first principles of physics, in the light of reason, are embraced directly by physics; the anterior first principles of metaphysics, among them the principle of noncontradiction, are embraced directly by metaphysics. If the axioms or self-evident postulates were not embraced directly, they could not be classified as first principles. Nevertheless, sensation precedes every act of reasoning.

From these observations it grows patent that infused faith and its acts must attain to its formal object with the most complete immediacy, barring every possibility of discursiveness. No matter how "evident" the preliminary reasons of credibility may be, they come no nearer to the focus of the formal object *quo* of infused faith, than does sensation to the reasoning processes of the mind.

The definition and division of truth are pertinent in this investigation:¹⁸ truth in understanding; truth in expression; truth in objective reality.

1. Truth is located principally and formally in the understanding. It is a judgment of the intellect which perceives the correspondence or equable matching between itself and the thing judged. This is truth in the knowing, truth that judges things to be what they really are and not to be what they are not.

2. Truth expressed in speech is measured by the veracity or truthfulness of the speaker or witness, and the correctness of what he says.

3. There is a truth imbedded in things themselves. Everything in nature bears an impress due to its similarity and correspondence with ideas or prototypes in the mind of God. A stone is said to be true, and not false or a facsimile, insofar as it has a nature in keeping with a di-

¹⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 16, a. 1, 2.

vine concept for stones and for itself in particular, as pre-existent and fashioned beforehand in the divine mind. Anything in creation is called true for exactly the same reason. Such truth is classified as ontological and transcendental. It is inherent in everything that is, just because it is, thereby justifying the interchangeableness of the terminology, "being" and "the true."¹⁴

Applying this doctrine to God, Aquinas reasons: Herein is the proof that God is Prime Truth or Truth Supreme.¹⁵ This means:

1. God is First Truth in the order of being. Divine being is not only conformed to its own intellect—divine intelligence is its substance. The very essence of God is self-existent Prime Truth, thus accounting for one true God, to the exclusion of false gods (*Deus verus est suum intelligere*).

2. God is First Truth in the order of understanding. God's infinite wisdom knows all things infallibly as they are. This has to be, since the knowledge of God is identical with God's essence and that makes it the cause of everything else, intelligences included.

3. God is First Truth in the order of speaking ["I am the Lord thy God"]. God cannot deceive or wish to deceive any creature.

The three conclusions presented by St. Thomas are easy to prove after assimilating the distinction between material and formal objects. Concerning the material and the formal object *quod*—they are one and the same—theologians find no difficulty in agreeing. We shall dispatch with them first. But the formal object *quo* is either not perceived or it is under fire—perhaps both.

First Conclusion. The material object of faith comprehends everything that God has revealed; that is to say, it comprehends everything that can be known on the authority of God revealing. God's authority is the formal object *quo*.

The Vatican Council identifies the sources of this knowledge: "In virtue of the divine and Catholic faith, all those things are to be believed which are contained in the Word of God—either the written or the traditional Word—and which are proposed for belief by the Church, as divinely revealed and so declared in solemn procedure or through the Church's ordinary universal magistracy" (Denz. 1792).

The controversy we are approaching is not engaged with the material object of faith, although certain matters under discussion have ref-

¹⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, a. 3, ad 1, a. 5.

¹⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 16, a. 5 ad 1, 2.

erence to it. We single out this one: In order to form part of the material object of faith, do truths have to be formally revealed—or would a virtual revelation suffice? Theological conclusions, for instance, lead to much knowledge deduced from formal revelations, which, without them, could not be acquired. Thomists contend that truths of the kind, derived from revelations, [transubstantiation, for example] may be put down as revealed in their cause; but that is not the same thing as strict and formal revelation. It is only a partial or relative (*secundum quid*), not an absolute (*simpliciter*) derivation, postulating revelation as a total necessary premise.

Second Conclusion. The formal object *quod* of faith is God, Prime Truth in Being, out of all proportion with natural truth, such as would be within the range of any creatable intelligence. It is God, in the intimate life of his GODNESS or Deity.

1. Holy Scripture abounds in proof.—Typical passages follow: St. Paul to the Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 2: 7–8, 10–11): “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a hidden mystery which God ordained before the world, unto our glory which none of the princes of this world knew . . .”; “Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him”; “But to us God has revealed them by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God,” which means God’s own intimate life; “What man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God, no man knows, but the Spirit of God.”

Christ’s own words are to the point. “I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones” (Mt. 11:25).

There is a question here of mysteries of the kingdom of heaven belonging primarily to the interior life of our Father in heaven. There is a mineral kingdom, a human kingdom, an angelic kingdom, but the highest above all is the kingdom of God.

2. Church authority also is conclusive. Witness the stand of the First Vatican Council in defining the relations between faith and reason, as against the pantheists and rationalists. (Denz. 1795). The Council upholds our thesis, thereby countering the denial of the supernatural order and with it the claim of the semirationalists. These last contend that, once revelation certifies them, the mysteries of faith, at least thereafter, can be demonstrated by unaided natural reason.

The united voice of the Catholic Church has held and holds per-

petually that there is a twofold level in cognition. Each order of knowledge has a distinction of its own, each is tied to its own principle and object. One has no other norm than natural reason; the other's principle is divine faith; and the object of divine faith, instead of being held within the horizon of natural reason, soars into mysteries hidden in God. Unless such secret truths were manifested through revelation, they would not be known at all.

Doctrine of the sort forms a denunciation of rationalism; but the council is equally definite against the semirationalists Gunther, Fro-schammer and Hermes (cf. Denz. 1796).

When reason is enlightened by faith and seeks industriously, piously, and soberly, as a gift from God, the improvement of its understanding of mysteries; and when a most fruitful advantage is thereby gained, thanks to analogies grasped with things already known naturally, and to the perception of relations binding the mysteries together and subordinating them to man's last end, reason remains nevertheless, still insufficiently equipped to embrace the same mysteries for what they really are, namely, truths which actually constitute the object of faith.

By their innermost nature, the divine secrets called mysteries are far above created intelligence. Thus, in spite of the revelation accorded and its acceptance through faith, it is faith itself which keeps them obscure, enshrouded, as it were, with a veil, permanently wrapped up in varying degrees of darkness. As long as mortal life lasts we are wayfarers "absent from the Lord, walking by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:6; cf. Denz. 1795).

3. *Theological Proof.* The formal object *quod* of any habit is the principal drawing factor in whatever it tends toward. It is the dominant aim which all subordinate means and ends are made to serve. For example; in the art of medicine, it is health; in physics, it is the combination of matter and motion; in mathematics, it is quantity; in metaphysics, it is being precisely as being.

But God is Prime Truth in virtue of his being. He is beyond the reach of all natural knowledge of intelligences either created or creatable. He is the principal object attained through faith. Such objects are Christ's humanity, the sacraments, and the full content of Holy Scripture. These are all believed in through faith in God and for the purpose of knowing God better, not merely as being—even though honored as supreme in metaphysics and natural theology—but in his intimate, characteristic, and most eminent Godness or deity.

Therefore, God, as Prime Truth in the order of being, supernatural in every sense, is the formal object *quod* of faith.

Corollary. If God had revealed nothing about himself, if all revelation had been only about creatures, faith would not be what it is. It would not be a theological virtue. It would be engulfed in a body of prophecy about future things. This is the common ground maintained by Thomists.

Confirmation. Theological virtues, differing as they do from all others, have God for their immediate object. Withdraw God as the formal object *quod* and they vanish. Faith, being an intellectual theological virtue, has to focus on God as Prime Truth.

So far so good. Theologians are in union over this initial conclusion; especially since the First Vatican Council leaves no alternative in its treatment of rationalists and semirationalists.¹⁶

Aquinas furnishes proof for holding that reason alone cannot establish the existence of an order of supernatural truth and life in God. Both objectively and subjectively, that truth and life tower high above all the natural forces and needs of any created intellect. This teaching is not only the opposite of rationalism: with regard to intellectual needs, it is against Baius; with regard to intellectual powers, it runs counter to the ontologists.

Let us quote from the Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentes* (I, chap. 3): "It is most clearly evident that among divine truths, all which are intelligible, there are certain ones that completely surpass the genius of human reason."

1. One reason is the nature of human cognition, which is normally derived "from creatures that are themselves effects, and by no means an adequate match for the power of the First Cause" producing them. Whatever is learned about God from creatures is analogical knowledge only and it signifies only in general.

Take the universal equation: God is being (*ens*). Being is descriptive. It concretizes something left unsaid in the declaration "God is God." And how does it describe? Either negatively: God is being but not finite or limited; or relatively: God is being supreme. God's essence or exclusive deity, God's intimate life, remains a secret. Whatever pertains immediately and *per se* to the hidden interior life of God—the deity—if known, has to be classified as supernatural truth.

¹⁶ Relative to difficulties raised by rationalists and semirationalists, cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 337, 370 (4th edition), pp. 315 ff., 346 ff.

Just as the vegetable kingdom ranks higher than the mineral, so also, only much higher above the rational and the most exalted angelic kingdoms, rises the kingdom of God. If the intimate life of God becomes known, it must be either directly through sight or vision, or else indirectly by revelation, which involves the obscurity of faith.

2. The same reasoning holds for the angels. Angels naturally know of God through spiritual creatures. But they likewise fall short in their concepts of the power inherent in the First Cause from whom spiritual agencies issue as created effects.

Granting hypothetically that an angelic intelligence was endowed with immediate knowledge of the deity, it would then have the same formal object as the divine intellect. That would make of it a mind created and yet divine, with all the fusion and confusion that pervades pantheistic notions about God and creation. In virtue of the principle of identity or noncontradiction, God is God and creature is creature. (Neither one is the other.)

3. There exist numerous natural mysteries in created things. Who can have the last word about the constituents of matter, electricity, light, transitive action, sensation, mental penetration, or free choice? For a stronger reason, the inner life of God must ever remain a mystery that challenges the capability of every created intellect to conceive. Indeed, it is a mystery prolific of mysteries that cannot be learned about unless they are divinely revealed. Even when divinely communicated, they retain an impenetrable obscurity as long as our wayfaring keeps us at a distance from God.

4. The faiths of Job and Paul are one. Job says: "In his greatness God exceeds our knowledge" (Jb. 36:26). Paul says: "We know in part. . . . I know in part: but then (in heaven) I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor. 13:9, 12).

The Formal Motive of Faith

How is it known?

Third Conclusion. The formal motive of infused faith or the formal object *quo*, is Prime Truth revealing. In the wording of the First Vatican Council, it is the "Authority of God revealing" (Denz. 1789).

1. *Scriptural Authority.* "The eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard; neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love him; but to us God has revealed them by his

Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9-10); "I confess to thee, O Father . . . because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to the little ones" (Mt. 11:25); "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17).

2. *Authority of the Church.* The First Vatican Council has pronounced (Denz. 1789): "This is the faith professed by the Catholic Church to be the beginning of salvation for mortals. It is a supernatural virtue by which, thanks to the motion and help of God's grace, we believe what God reveals to be true, not because its intrinsic truth is obvious under scrutiny according to the natural light of reason, but on the authority of God himself revealing" (Denz. 1789).

3. *Theological Proof.* It is the doctrine of Aquinas. The formal object *quo*, which is the formal motive of any habit in the field of knowing, is the medium through which one knows. But faith's only reason for assenting to any truth is the fact that God has revealed it, God functioning as First Truth in the revealing. This is why the formal object *quo* of faith is Prime Truth revealing or the authority of God as revealer.

The major premise has been explained in the definition of a formal motive or the formal object *quo*. The minor premise has been revealed as shown in the preceding paragraphs 1 and 2. A double confirmation may be added.

1. For faith to be reposed in any speaker, his veracity counts as the foremost or formal motive. Veracity implies sufficiency of knowledge and conveys certitude through the speaker's authority. Therefore, the formal motive of divine faith is the veracity of God revealing. His infallible wisdom is taken for granted, which guarantees stability on the authority of God in revealing.

2. Faith, as fostered by Holy Church, is certain and infallible knowledge. This could not be true without the support of a motive that is absolutely infallible. But there is no such infallible motive, apart from Prime Truth which, by revealing, functions as First Truth speaking. If Prime Truth cannot be deceived in what it understands, neither can it deceive in any of its utterances.

The authority of God revealing presupposes both elements: veracity or truthfulness of God in speaking and his correctness or truth in understanding. [Hence, the prayerful conviction: God cannot deceive nor can he be deceived.]

First Doubt. In what manner is faith fastened to the authority of God revealing?

A parcel of texts from St. Thomas provides various partial answers, the best key to which is this: "Faith depends on divine Truth as its medium." "Believing in God is what is meant by an act of faith, since the formal object of faith is Prime Truth, to which man clings and on account of which he assents to whatever he believes.

"In the object of faith there are two elements. One is formal, the other, material. The formal element is First Truth existing high above the reach of creaturely cognition. The material element is whatever we assent to, through fidelity to First Truth."

As for the faith which demons possess, it is not a gift of grace. It is a conviction into which they are forced by the natural perspicacity of their understanding. [Demons are good sign readers.]

Relative to fragmentary faith, is it possible to doubt one article and retain formless faith in the others? Aquinas points out that heretics who eliminate one or another article of faith cannot accept the others in the way in which Catholics hold to them. Demons may not be in error concerning the profession of them, but Catholics have integral steadfastness from their unqualified inherence in Prime Truth first. This is what every man needs as a help in developing the habit of faith.

The truths which heretics profess are only a choice of what suits their own judgment and liking. A ruinous conclusion follows. "There is but one medium for all articles of faith," pursues St. Thomas. Faith accepts them in their totality, on the authority of the divine speaker, prior to whom there is no other truth. Divine or Prime or First Truth has uttered what is proposed for belief in Holy Scripture and what has been incorporated into the sound doctrine of the Church that understands. Whoever falls from First Truth has lost the faith completely.¹⁷

After supplementing the content of the foregoing passages with that of other similar ones, Thomists as a class solve the doubt submitted in concise statements.

Infused faith inheres in the authority of God revealing: (1) immediately, without mental hesitancy or discussion; (2) in an absolutely supernatural manner; (3) by believing in the strict sense of the term; not by seeing nor by intuitively knowing, but by voluntary assent to

¹⁷ Thus far, texts bearing on the first doubt are from the *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2; q. 5, aa. 1-3; q. 6, a. 1.

Prime Truth revealing and to all things it reveals. For all three parts of this solution, proof is available.

First Part: the immediacy of faith's assent. This follows from the principle already asserted: "Faith depends on divine truth as its medium." Divine Truth is its formal object *quo*. It unfolds—just as in geometry correct knowledge unfolds through the solidity of advancing theorems, established progressively from the first accepted self-evident axioms which continue to back up all its demonstrations. But every habit has to attain to its formal object *quo* immediately, for it is by reason of the formal object *quo* that it attains to all else besides. Indeed, were a formal object *quo* abandoned, it could only be in favor of some other medium; in which case, the other medium would become a formal object *quo* for the habit in question.

It is this metaphysical necessity that makes sight operative, only through contact with light thrown upon objects (already) colored. It turns mathematics into a science unit, by the application of undeniable first principles of number to the intricate relationships of quantities. Metaphysics itself is developed as a consistent body of true knowledge derived from the unique perception of *ens*, or being as being. The cogency of these comparisons is not shrunk by the fact that sensation is presupposed to all of them. It is even better illustrated thereby.

In faith there cannot be as in sense phenomena, long chains of formal objects *quo*, linking habits to one another. St. Thomas admits the possibility of an indefinite series. Being, in metaphysics, is the root. But the root could never be planted without the advance discernment of multiple beings, classifiable indefinitely, because of successive individual formal objects *quo*; for example, visible beings as seen in the light, or counted, weighed, and measured by unique standards for each group [clocks for time, thermometers for temperature, etc. Meters and gadgets might be styled mechanical objects *quo*.].

The shakiness of all created standards which are left to themselves is unquestionable. It can be remedied in a surpassing way by faith. The intellect itself is all but transformed by it. Aquinas leaves no room for doubt: we are compelled to admit that "faith, which is power, makes man's intellect cling to truth which consists of divine knowledge, superior to and transcending all truth for which human intelligence is naturally proportioned. . . . Indeed, all truth gives way unless it is rectified through uncreated Truth."¹⁸

¹⁸ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 8; *ibid.*, ad 2, 4.

Second Part: infused faith attains Prime Truth revealing in a supernatural manner. This is proved objectively and subjectively.

Objective Proof. Whatever is supernatural in essence is knowable only supernaturally. Truth and being are convertible terms. But in revealing, Prime Truth in itself and in its operation is essentially supernatural, which is far more than a miracle needs to be. Supernaturalness in the mode of production suffices for a miracle. Prime Truth, on the other hand, is uncreated [not produced]. It is of the same grade as the formal object *quod* of faith, namely, the intimate life of God, or God honored in his Godness or deity.

It follows, therefore, that Prime Truth, in the act of revealing, is knowable only supernaturally, like the Trinity. Otherwise, there would be no proper proportion between the formal objects *quo* and *quod*. The object *quo* could not manifest the object *quod* as it should, since both objects are formal.

Just as sensible light must have some proportion to the sensible object which it manifests, so must intelligible light be adjusted to the intelligible object which it shows in truth. Thus, it turns out that, over and above the natural evidence gleaned from the signs of revelation, Prime Truth rises, engaged in revealing—itsself being objective supernatural light, supernatural even in its essence.

When, therefore, the formal motive of faith is assigned to be the "authority of God revealing," this does not mean the dominant authority belonging to God as author of nature, or even as miracle worker, in ways men can naturally find out and talk about. It means the "authority of God" as author of grace and glory, neither one of which is within the scope of natural knowledge. As author of nature, God can indeed reveal truths about nature. He can also confirm them by miracles, for agencies normally match the purposes aimed at in what they do. [But this does not suffice to establish the claim, which is otherwise false, in virtue of which God communicates supernatural truths, acting merely as author of nature.]¹⁹

Subjective Proof. That infused faith has to do with Prime Truth subjectively, is established from its nature. From an infused habit issue supernatural acts and not natural performances. But faith is an infused supernatural habit, revealed as such and, for that reason, called a "gift of God." Therefore, any adhesion to Prime Truth revealing that results from infused faith must be supernatural and not natural (cf. Eph. 2:8).

¹⁹ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, 494.

Third Part: infused faith inheres in Prime Truth revealing through the act of believing Prime Truth itself and all mysteries revealed. Believing in this sense is far different from seeing or naturally learning. The proof is both subjective and objective.

Subjectively, unlike natural knowledge or vision, infused faith does not really know—does not really see—it believes, and in a dark manner that will be explained later on. Objectively, Prime Truth revealing is essentially supernatural. But an object essentially supernatural cannot be seen immediately, outside the beatific vision, wherein one beholds and is identified with God's essence. Neither can it be proved by merely natural principles, nor even by miracles naturally known, because that which is supernatural by essence is knowable only by supernatural means. Therefore, Prime Truth revealing, since it cannot be known naturally by wayfarers, nor demonstrated, is believed in conjunction with all the mysteries it certifies.²⁰

Cajetan's diction is simple. "Divine revelation embraces together the *quo* and *quod* of what is seen. Just as in the transcendentals unity is one and goodness is good, so also in the *quo* and *quod* of believing." [The one and the good are both true.] "Unity is oneness by itself—that is its state. Hence, divine revelation is one. On account of it, all things revealed are believed—and itself is believed in advance, on account of itself, without the need of any other revelation. By one and the same act we believe God, in God, and on God, for God's sake."²¹

Aquinas was leading Cajetan: "Prime Truth is the object of faith, precisely according as faith offers objects unseen while remaining itself unseen." "In the object of faith there are two factors: a quasi-formal factor, namely Prime Truth self-existent and high above every form of knowledge a creature can reach; and a quasi-material factor comprehending whatever else we assent to in virtue of Prime Truth."²²

Confirmation. Discard Prime Truth as the formal object *quo* and supernatural certitude thereupon dwindles or succumbs to a lower grade of historical certitude based on miracles. But miracles are only

²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, (1st edition), p. 485; (3rd edition), pp. 255–65; (4th edition, 1945), p. 452.

²¹ Cajetan's Commentary on IIa-IIae, q. 2, a. 2; since then, the Thomists commonly. Cf. *De Revelatione* (1st edition), pp. 485 ff.; (4th edition, 1945), p. 452.

²² *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae q. 4, a. 1; q. 5, a. 1; cf. *Comm. in Sent., De Veritate*, as cited in *De Revelatione*, I, 485, shorter edition, p. 256, 4th ed. p. 452. Tanquerey presents the Thomistic solution creditably, save for one inaccuracy, viz., the use of the term *video* where *concredo* would be exact. His comparisons with the theories of De Lugo and Billot are reliable.

signs of revelation, not premises engendering it. [Boards and posts suffice for signs but not for what they advertise.]

The substitution of signs or miracles for demonstrative principles would destroy the superiority and supernatural character of certitude in faith. The same fate would overtake metaphysics, if it were made to repose not on the intellectual evidence of principles, but on the experience of sensation. Yet this undoing of metaphysics is what sensualists and phenomenologists are intent upon. They deny the ontological value of principles, crowding it out with an elusive stand in favor of phenomenal self-sufficiency. And yet they argue: Every phenomenon proceeds from another phenomenon; hence, one can never get back to a First Cause. What an unstable and unanchored formula to be accepted as it is, for a principle of causality, on the grounds that a First Cause cannot be established above phenomena.

Scholastics all agree to what the etymology of the word intellect suggests. Intelligence is an *intus legendo* product. Its mental pursuit is for *ens* or true being, abstracting from all phenomena. Time and again St. Thomas brings this out, as we shall verify hereafter.²³

Second Doubt. In the final analysis what is it that really constitutes our certitude in believing? What is the ultimate, its formal object *quod*?

Theologians are divided on the subject. We present here positions represented by (1) Cardinal De Lugo, (2) Billot, (3) the Thomists. Tanqueray's *De Fide* (1926, p. 168), is worth consulting.

1. De Lugo. The authority of God speaking is understood from the phraseology, by a purely natural grasp, through the application of an axiom: "If it is God who speaks, what he says is true." The fact of revelation is proposed by the Church, as in the proposition: "God has revealed the divinity of Christ."

The support of the declaration is lodged in so many and so great miracles confirming it, that the intellect firmly perceives: it is God himself who has revealed Christ's divinity. Thus far the knowledge and certainty are only natural. Their perfection evolves through grace, with the result that faith is discursive. From two antecedent truths it reasons out a third, namely, the divinity of Christ (De Lugo, *De Fide*, disp. I, n. 82).

Rectification Needed. Thomists reply: 1) God's veracity presupposes God's existence as rationally proved; otherwise it is only alleged. In either case it is not an immediate object of perception. But the scien-

²³ Cf. *De Revelatione* (1st edition), pp. 470-80; (4th edition, 1945), pp. 438-48.

tific proof of God's existence entails specific difficulties. Besides, even the fact of revelation, in spite of its confirmation by miracles, is not recognized intelligently except through a rather complicated network of critical and historical analyses. 2) Granting, nevertheless, that God's veracity and his revealing utterances are both known immediately, adhesion to them would at best be not more than a function of preliminary knowledge, entirely within the sphere of essentially natural cognition. It would fall short of being a supernatural act of faith. 3) In the matter of faith, supernatural certitude would formally decline into the inferior grade of philosophical and historical certitude. 4) In De Lugo's opinion, therefore, it is hard to see any real necessity for a grace of faith, either to facilitate firmness in believing, such as the Pelagians stood for, or even for the barest belief that is required for salvation.

2. Position defended by Billot, Bainvel, and Van Noort. Contrary to De Lugo, they contend that faith is not discursive. This is barred by the formal dependence of faith on the "authority of God revealing," prior to the act of faith, and with full appreciation of the findings of reason and human authority. In accepting faith in the Blessed Trinity, as Billot explains, "I assent, not because I am moved by the evidence of testimony, as are demoniacal spirits, but because I yield directly to the dignity and authority of (God) the revealer" (Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis*, thesis 16).

Rectification is still needed. Thomists respond: 1) The supernatural certitude of faith is again liquidated into an inferior brand of certitude, because the formal motive of faith cannot operate without being known; and for it to operate infallibly, it would have to be infallibly known. 2) The act of believing would not be supernatural in Billot's premise, at least in its substance, for it would be propped up by a formal motive completely knowable naturally. This would prevent it from being essentially supernatural. Suárez herein sides with the Thomists.

The positive factors in what Thomists hold are the following. The certitude of our faith may be considered from three angles: 1) The formal motive of assent in the intellect. The formal adhesion, without intermediary, is to Prime Truth revealing, and to Prime Truth as the object *quo* and *quod*, that is believed and believed in. 2) The Voice of the Church. The norm of cleavage between things revealed and other things not revealed, is the Church's infallibility; but the infallibility is believed in only because of the authority of God who revealed it. 3) The evidence of credibility. Materially speaking, we are touching

only the outside surfaces of faith in all appeals to the alleged evidence of signs for the credibility of revelation. Faith would be debased if confused with them. They have no function in themselves beyond conditioning reason ahead of time to cooperate with Prime Truth, at least negatively, by ridding itself of conceptual obstacles.²⁴

Suárez and Scheeben mutilate the unity of coherence in contending that, by the simple confession of belief in the Blessed Trinity, for instance, we combine three distinct acts of faith, namely: I believe God always speaks truly; I believe God has revealed the mystery of the Trinity; therefore, I believe in the Trinity. These three acts are one in Thomistic reckoning. Aquinas gives the key: When mysteries are believed in, revelation is believed in by the same act; and that same act embraces God as revealing and revealed.²⁵

Thomists are dealing always with infused, not discursive, faith. The infusion is an act of Prime Truth revealing, which act involves all mysteries revealed, inclusive of the motive *quod* and *quo*, in virtue of the subject's assent to them as objects of belief.

This simple indivisible act of believing extends also to the infallibility of the Church proposing definite articles; but only as a condition for security in the communication of such knowledge.

The function of discursive natural reason is to establish the historicity of the Gospel and the infallibility of the Church as evidently credible, thanks to the miracles confirming both. Yet, motives of credibility are extrinsic to the motives of faith, for the motives of faith are intrinsic to faith's infusion.

This reasoning differs from the views of De Lugo and his imitators. Postulating the discursive nature of faith, they maintain that discursive faith actually believes revealed mysteries because of the nature of its judgments in the premises. First, God's veracity is *per se* known and reason cannot deny it. Secondly, God has revealed the doctrine propounded by Holy Church, and reason cannot but be convinced by the accompanying miracles and other signs. From this it follows that faith is not supernatural in its substance; nor essentially, by reason of the formal object specifying it. It is supernatural only because of the manner in which it is produced. Infused geometry would be supernatural

²⁴ Cf. Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and Salmanticenses; *De Revelatione*, chap. 15, art. 3; John of St. Thomas, *De Gratia*, disp. 20, a. 1, n. 7; *De Fide* q. 1, disp. 2, a. 2, nn. 1, 4; a. 3, n. 7; Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, tr. XIV, disp. 3, dub. 3, *passim* nn. 28-61; *De Fide*, disp. 1, dub. 5, nn. 156, 163, 181, 193.

²⁵ Cf. Suárez, *De Fide*, disp. 3, sec. 6, 12; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1.

for the same reason, as also would be the revelation of purely natural truths bearing on religion.

For Thomists, the final analysis of certitude in faith is borne out in a way running parallel with what has been laid down about the formal motive of faith.

First, the supernatural character of faith touches three items; the method of its infusion; its essence; and its knowability. Being a gift of God, it is bestowed by Prime Truth revealing; that is to say, it results from an uncreated action manifesting the truth about God, not only as author and irresistible administrator of creation, capable of miraculous performances in the realm of sense, but as the author of grace and glory. It can only be in this most exalted order that God reveals his intimate and essentially supernatural life.

Agents need to match the ends for which they function. Therefore, God, as author of nature, does not reveal the mysteries of grace. To do this he has to show himself as the author of grace. That higher showing is supernatural, not merely natural.

This argumentation is equally valid against Billot who, although rejecting the discursive faith of De Lugo, is insistent that the formal motive of infused faith is, nevertheless, within man's natural reach.

Secondly—as the Thomists proceed—the superior excellence of certitude begotten of faith matches the supernatural character of the formal motive of faith. Otherwise the supernatural certitude of infused faith would dissolve formally into natural certitude concerning the historical fact of a revelation confirmed by miracles. This would put an end to the superior certitude issuing from the act of infusion, from the faith itself. Indeed, even the first principles of metaphysics would be robbed of their superior certitude, were it, in parallel fashion, to be reduced materially and formally to the limits of antecedent sensation.

Corollary I. Billuart expresses the Thomistic conviction which confronts De Lugo. The Church's testimony in propounding doctrine has nothing to do with the formal object *quo* of infused faith: 1) It is a purely created thing in itself, whereas the formal motive of theological faith ought to be uncreated. If it fails in this, it would cease to be a theological virtue; it would belong to the moral virtues as a phase of natural religion. Similarly, hope must be bolstered up intrinsically by divine assistance and charity, by God's own intimate goodness. 2) No proposal or proposition formulated by the Church can influence intrinsically the act of assenting, as does the divine operation in revealing.

Therefore, the Church's procedures, even in defining, have to be classified as a condition without which certain proper revelations would not be officially applied to us. [Examples are the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, which, during particular epochs, were officially venerated through canonical strictures dictated by prudence in face of widespread controversy. Obedience had to be the universal course. This did not prevent subsequent clear-cut definitions of an older and duly authenticated past from professing their lineage in the present from ancient tenets, as though the latter had never been vitally interrupted.]

The human will is moved by the goodness of what attracts, rather than by the sterile knowledge of the goodness. The knowledge is a condition *sine qua non* for displaying the goodness; but the attractiveness is in the goodness discerned, not in the intellect or the knowledge displaying it. Fire may feed on stubble, but only on condition that it be brought close enough to ignite it. Cognition is approximation.

Corollary II. This is a reply to De Lugo. Divine faith is not discursive. It is a habit of simple knowing, even though it presupposes a degree of discursive apologetical treatment on a lower level.

Corollary III. Independently of what Protestants may claim, Catholic faith involves no vicious circle in any of its acts. That false charge is wrongly supposed to be established in the following way: Catholics believe on the authority of the Church that God has revealed the Gospel, and they hold that the Church is infallible on account of divine revelation expressed in the Gospel. This is a vicious circle.

1. But what about this other form of reasoning? Protestants base their faith on a private spirit claimed to be revealed; and they affirm that it is revealed because of the private spirit itself. 2. The Catholic position may be a material circle—it is not a formal one; it is not a vicious circle. If it were, both propositions featured in it would have to agree in the same formal sense. They do not work out that way.

In taking the motives of credibility for granted, as presented by human reason, we indeed hold that the authority of the Church compels us to believe in God revealing; but this is only by way of producing a correct formula. When we obey, we profess the faith. But professing the faith is not at all the same thing as interiorly believing what is professed. Besides the preliminary formula, a formal motive must operate in the mind to make the profession through the intellectual act of believing.

To say that the infallibility of the Church is presupposed to revelation and then to claim that it is established by revelation is needlessly confusing. Revelation is prior to the Church, being the formal motive in the act of faith. Revelation is the *quo*; the Church is *quod*. Its infallibility is a truth revealed. For this reason we believe in the holy Catholic Church. [God did the revealing, God "who can neither deceive nor be deceived."]

What the Church does in expounding revelations is thereafter only an instrumental means of making revelation known—a condition *sine qua non*, indeed—but it is not productive of revelation, nor contributory in any degree to the essence or nature of revelation, nor to the intrinsic operation or habit expressed in the simple word *credo*—"I believe."

Reciprocal causality, wherever it exists, has to be in order to balance and to match in different senses and ways. This is a circumstance that neutralizes the possibility of a vicious circle. The intellect acts first by an objective influence, bringing it to bear upon and to direct the will. Next, the will reacts by applying the mind to exercise attention. Subordinated to this spiritual interlocking is the supply of materials received from the senses into the intellect, there to be appraised or evaluated according to the first principles of reason.

Support from the doctrine of Aquinas. The final analysis of faith as we have expounded it, agrees with the teaching of St. Thomas. Numerous passages from his writings have been collated in *De Revelatione*.²⁸ The following propositions are a resumé: 1) Prime Truth is an object of faith, inasmuch as it is not an object of sight—neither itself nor other objects are believed in because of it. 2) "In the object of faith there is a quasi-formal element, namely, Prime Truth existing high above all natural creaturely knowledge. There is also a material element, namely, whatever is believed as a consequence of our clinging to Prime Truth." 3) "The demon is forced into believing through sheer clear-sightedness, confronted as he is by the signal evidence of what it would be foolhardy for him to deny." 4) "Should a heretic discredit any one article of faith, he forfeits theological faith in all others, both informed and formless faith," faith living and dead. "The reason is this: the species of

²⁸ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 8 ad 2, 3, 9, 16; *De Revelatione* (1st edition), pp. 470–80; (4th edition), pp. 438–48; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 1; q. 5, aa. 1–3; q. 6, a. 1.

a habit depends on its object considered in its formal sense. Take away the formal object and the species of the habit vanishes. Now the formal object of faith is Prime Truth, as known from Holy Scripture and the teaching of the Church. What these sources manifest is the same Prime Truth from which they are derived." 5) "Whoever, therefore, abandons the doctrine of the Church as the infallible and divine rule for believing . . . does not retain the habit of supernatural infused faith. Whatever fragments of faith he proposes to believe in, he is wedded to in some other way, such as, by opinion, persuasion, or self-will." 6) "The faithful accept all articles of faith by stout adherence to Prime Truth, for which help from the habit of faith is needed. Their loyalty is a grace without which the formal motive of faith cannot actuate them." 7) "As often as man is elevated above his natural self, by assenting to what faith teaches, it is necessary that the operation, by which he is lifted, be performed by a supernatural principle within him."

Corollary. From this it follows that a very grave sin is perpetrated by confounding formal objects in philosophy and theology, when there is question of human habits, no matter whether they are intellectual, scientific habits, or moral virtues, either acquired or infused. Hence, keep formal objects distinct and always clear in view. Do not mix them. To do so is to spread universal havoc, such as confusion between intelligible and sensible objects, between sensualism and materialism; with the crossing of life and truth in the supernatural and natural orders in favor of naturalism by gravitation, or pantheism by sublimation, mistaking grossly therein the object of our own intellect as identical with the object of the divine mind.

Solution of the principal objections. Directed against the Thomistic doctrine concerning the formal object of faith and the final analysis of certitude in believing.

Objection I. The final analysis of certitude in believing must be determined by its ultimate basis. But this is the ultimate basis, Prime Truth, in its intimate being. Thereon rests Prime Truth in understanding and Prime Truth in expression (*in essendo, in intelligendo, in dicendo*). Therefore, the ultimate in the analysis of certitude is rooted in Prime Truth, basically existent (*in essendo*).

Reply. Both premises need to be distinguished. There is a difference between certitude and the motive of certitude. Neither the major nor the minor touches the motive of certitude which is the point under dis-

cussion. The motive is one and immutable; namely, the infallible authority of God revealing.

Hence, Prime Truth *in essendo* explains what makes God infallible, antecedent to his revealing anything. It does not explain, by itself, the cause of our inerrancy in assenting. God has to speak first; the certitude of faith springs from believing what he says because he says it; then, ulteriorly and comprehensively what he is, because he says that, too. ["I am who am."]

Faith is simple and exclusive, it cannot be discursive, once its formal object or motive is perceived. It is like sight that sees colors in the light. Just how light makes colors visible is another question. God's word is what we believe in, no matter what It says.

Objection II. Cajetan cites this interesting attack made by Scotus. "According to Thomists" Catholics believe blindly in the authority of God engaged in the act of revealing. But to believe Prime Truth in the act of revealing, on account of itself, is a vicious circle. To believe it by reason of some other revelation would lead to an infinite series. Do the Thomists get anywhere?

Reply. Prime Truth revealing compels faith in itself without a vicious circle, just as light reveals itself without the need of any other light to manifest it. Evidence is of itself evident. It is the *quod* and *quo* of what is perceived.

Nevertheless, the act of God revealing, being uncreated, may be dazzling and blinding—as we say, "obscure." We have no faculty with which to grasp it adequately. God remains invisible, as does the divine act called revelation. By faith we inhere in the mystery by supernaturally believing. The Angelic Doctor says this expressly: "First and foremost, divine testimony inculcates itself." ["I am the Lord your God."] "All else follows as a consequence, just as light is the *quod* and then the *quo* of whatever it visibilizes."²⁷ St. Augustine's quotation from St. John's Gospel (8:14) is significant. Jesus, "the Light of the World," says: "If I give testimony about myself, my testimony is true." Augustine comments: "Light shows itself in showing other objects. You light a lamp to search for a garment, not merely for the sake of seeing the lamp burn. Something similar is true of the light of divine revelation, even though beclouded with the obscurity of faith. Prime Truth revealing remains invisible, if only in being essentially supernatural. Nevertheless, we inhere therein by believing, and simultaneously we

²⁷ Cf. *De Veritate* q. 14, a. 8 ad. 2.

believe in the mysteries revealed, just as in seeing we see the light in seeing all colors made visible through the light.

Cajetan reinforces this truth. For him, it runs parallel with the transcendentals, unity and goodness. Unity is itself one and goodness is, of itself, good; thus, divine revelation is self-revealing. It is the *quod* as well as the *quo* in believing. Just as unity is itself the state of one oneness, so also divine revelation, presenting all objects revealed, is itself believed as one thing with them, without any necessity of another distinct revelation for itself. One and the same act of faith believes God and in God. This will grow clearer as we proceed.

Cajetan's conclusion is important. The direct effect of the habits of infused faith causes man to cling to God as to a personal witness testifying on behalf of all things to be believed. In that sense St. John wrote: "Whoever believes in the Son of God, has the testimony of God within himself" (1 Jn. 5:10).²⁸ There would indeed be a vicious circle if, as in the thinking of Suárez, every act of faith had to be cut up into three: (1) belief in the divine veracity; (2) the fact of an actual divine revelation; (3) the mystery revealed. But the act of faith is simple and unique. In virtue of it we believe God, we believe in God, we believe in all that he reveals.

We shall allow De Lugo to assail Suárez. You believe that God is sovereignly truthful because he reveals it; and you believe he revealed it because he is sovereignly truthful. Surely that is a vicious circle. It makes divine revelation necessary in advance, in order to believe God's veracity, whereas it can only be the veracity of God, admitted in advance, that could authenticate revelation. It is impossible to believe with divine faith the sovereign truthfulness of God, without revelation preceding as the motive of faith. As a matter of fact, Cajetan rightly holds that it is by one and the same act that revelation itself is believed, in conjunction with the mysteries revealed. Cajetan therein reproduces St. Thomas.²⁹

Objection I. It is impossible to believe in God revealing without first believing that God exists. Therefore, I believe that God exists for some reason other than revelation itself.

Reply. Men very often know, in a way much different from believing, that there is an author of nature in existence and that he is God. But when there is question of the author of grace, they cannot learn of

²⁸ Cf. Cajetan's commentary, n. 11; *De Revelatione*, I, p. 465.

²⁹ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 491; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1.

his existence by natural knowing, but only by believing. In this case his existence has to be revealed simultaneously. Revelation manifests, besides itself, the existence of the agency revealing. It is like Peter's speech which manifests the existence of Peter while communicating what Peter has to say.

Objection II. There is no supernatural necessity for having to believe in Prime Truth revealing; it is sufficient to know of the fact naturally. The formal motive of faith is the "authority of God revealing." But reason by itself is sufficiently equipped to come naturally to the knowledge of God's authority in revealing. Therefore, there is no need of requiring God to be the what, why, and wherefore of faith in an exclusive supernatural manner. This is what making Prime Truth the object *quod* and *quo* of faith amounts to.

Reply. That may be true of God as the author of nature. It has no conclusive bearing on the authority of God revealing himself as the author of supernatural grace.

Objection III. There is no double authority, any more than there is a double goodness in God.

Reply. True; but the indivisible authority of God assumes a double relationship in our regard. It is linked with the truths of nature and with supernatural verities as with two distinct bodies of truth. In a parallel manner, the indivisible goodness of God is an ultimate for two distinct orders of created goodness: nature itself and the complete supernatural domain. God could have restricted revelation to the truths of purely natural religion. He could have confirmed those truths with miracles. But in so doing he would not have acquitted himself as author of grace.

Objection IV. The authority of God as originator of the supernatural order, nevertheless, remains knowable naturally, once it is confirmed by a miracle, if only because the miracle itself is naturally knowable.

Reply. All that a miracle can accomplish is to show God at work, manifesting his power as author and sovereign administrator of nature and nature's forces. It is only a modification of nature's resources, by a productive act, wholly unlike the operation of nature's laws, that God effects through miraculous intervention. There is no necessary connection between the performance of a miraculous gesture and the order of supernatural grace. There need be nothing supernatural in the substance of the miracle. Even resurrection from the dead, the greatest of historical miracles, terminates at the restoration of natural or physical life to the corpse. That the risen body should be with or without super-

natural life is another question. In the same way, if God were to reveal only the truths of natural religion, these truths could never accumulate so as to engender supernatural religion, even though the singular mode of their transmission was supernatural. Christianity is far more than a mere modal variety among other religions: it is a supernatural creation.

Objection V. The Gospel itself shows by "what is written," that God revealed supernatural mysteries. And the written Gospel was confirmed by miracles. Therefore, supernatural faith is not required to establish revelation.

Reply. If supernatural faith can be dispensed with so easily, then it follows that the basis, or the ultimate analysis of faith, lies in the natural evidence of miracles. Acquired faith would be equally as good and demons could be endowed with it as well as men. What would then become of the authority of God revealing? It would be an idle, empty material profession. It would not signify the authority of God revealing something formally aligned with the order of grace—much less himself as the author of grace. The very concept would be missing and the highest attainment for the believer would be a symbol quite inferior and wholly contained within the low range of things naturally knowable.

As an example, let us suppose that a student has grasped the metaphysical principle of finality: "Every agent acts with a purpose"—that is, on account of some end to be attained. He has no idea of the metaphysical perspicuity imbedded in the proposition, but the teaching has been made clear to him through concrete examples borrowed from the sensible order. He has become convinced through analogies in nature and art. The mastering of these aids in the form of ingenious comparisons would constitute the student's excellence, not as a metaphysician, but as one possessing an enlightened physical grasp of an isolated metaphysical truth.

Something similar marks the musical connoisseur who, devoid of a musical sense, absorbs materially the sounds and tones of a symphony, which he may be competent to analyze and to classify correctly, without any uplifting appreciation of the spirit or soul of the composition. St. Paul's norm is pertinent: "The sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God. It is foolishness to him. He cannot understand" (1 Cor. 2:14). The letter of the Gospel does not suffice to make its spirit perceptible. Such an effect requires that the mind be lifted above itself through infused faith.³⁰

³⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2; q. 6, aa. 1-2.

St. Augustine does not hesitate to call this grace the secret working of a special providence in true disciples. These form a school apart, as it were—far off from the senses and sense-life. It is the school where God teaches and is listened to. We see them come in numbers to God the Son. We see them believing in Christ. What we do not see is the occasion and hidden manner in which they hear God the Father's voice and learn from him.³¹ Infused faith thus matches that of St. Peter (Mt. 16:17).

Objections VI, VII, and VIII crystallize the chief remaining difficulties of minor importance.

Objection VI. Why should it make so much difference in claiming that the knowledge of the formal motive of faith is infallible and supernatural, since the said knowledge is only a condition? It is the motive of faith itself that counts. It suffices that the motive be infallible.

Reply. The formal motive of infused faith does not operate like a machine, or a blind, unknown efficient cause. It moves objectively only after becoming known; and it moves infallibly only under the influence of grace, to which we infallibly assent. Apart from this explanation, the infallibility of faith is only an hypothesis. It depends on a postulate that revelation is true. Revelation, however, might be only apparent. It needs a foregoing certitude that it is always infallible.

Objection VII. De Lugo limps in volunteering that the supernatural character of faith is sufficiently safeguarded in being based on natural knowledge concerning the fact of revelation, elevated to the supernatural order by grace.

Reply. If that were true, it would follow that faith is made supernatural by a modality only, and not in its substance. In the same way acts of acquired temperance are supernaturalized and ordained to a supernatural end through charity. But the improvement is one of mode, accessory and extrinsic to the virtue itself which remains (like temperance) because of its own intrinsic formal object.

Objection VIII. Thomists are at variance with St. Thomas where he says: "It is possible for a supernatural thing to be superior to human nature in two ways. The first way affects the very substance of an act, such as the working of miracles and knowing the secret and otherwise uncertain determinations of divine wisdom. Regarding matters of this

³¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, PL 44:970; *De Revelatione*, I, p. 507.

kind, grace is not conferred on man as an habitual gift. The second kind of supernatural gift is superior to human nature through a modality in the act that does not affect its substance. Such acts develop the love of God as known through the mirroring of creatures. A gift of this kind can be a formal habit."³²

Reply. In these citations, the Angelic Doctor is not discussing our topic at all. We answer with John of St. Thomas, without denying either proposition. The context of Aquinas limits the views he expresses to the substance of efficient causes. That substance may be either beyond or not beyond the resources of human nature. Aquinas is not treating of the specification of infused faith, the problem that engrosses so many. His statements are generic, not specific. Hence, he adds that human nature can produce substantially real acts of God-love, induced thereto by the contemplation of nature as God's mirror. But this is very far away from the analysis of infused faith, which cannot be correct if it ignores the need of a supernatural formal object, a why and a wherefore on its own level.³³

Objection IX. Billuart furnishes the following objection as though it might be ominous. If each one of the faithful infallibly believe revelation and its full content of revealed truths through the interior illumination of God's Holy Spirit, of what use is the service of the Church in decreeing what things have been revealed and what not? Are we not lapsing into Protestantism?

Reply. The Church's supervision and formulation of doctrines true and false—canonizing the true, anathematizing the false—would indeed be an idle concern if the divine revelation were directed immediately and *per se* to Christians, as it was in antiquity to individual prophets. But this is not the case. Revelation reaches us from the prophets, from Christ and the apostles, through the teaching Church, instead of through private inspiration. Hence, the ultimate resolution of our faith into whatever and "all the Church teaches," amounts to the adoption of an infallible rule of discernment as to the *quod*, or to what has been revealed. Such an extrinsic informative rule is not to be confused with the formal, interior motivating principle that governs our interior intellectual assent to the doctrines thus officially promulgated. Billuart, who

³² *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 2 ad 3.

³³ Cf. John of St. Thomas, *De Gratia*, diss. 20, a. 1, solv. obj.; *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 215, 486, n. 1.

devised the objection, keeps abreast of the best of Thomists through this answer.³⁴

Solution of three doubts:

First Doubt. What is the relationship between the historical certitude concerning the fact of revelation when confirmed by miracles and the supernatural certitude accompanying infused faith?

Solution. Such historical certitude is not the principle from which the certitude of faith results. [Water does not flow up hill.] It is only a medium of acquaintanceship, with a natural pathway leading up through preliminaries toward supernatural faith.

The assent of faith is a simple nondiscursive act: "I believe." In this respect it is comparable to the acceptance of the first principles of rational understanding: "I see." Billuart furnishes an apt comparison. When an instructor in philosophy has to introduce students into the sphere of metaphysical principles by awakening their discernment of metaphysical evidence, he begins by explaining the terms expressing the principles. Next, he has recourse to concrete examples, comparisons, and other devices for clarifying their sight. He does not, however, attain to success until the student mind, after having been aided by these helps, leaps off into a higher certitude, newly acquired and perceived, by assenting directly to a metaphysical principle. Such a principle is that of causality or finality. A new alertness has sprung from the perception of evidence intrinsically imbedded in the principle itself.

Thereupon, the learner discards the ingenious explanations and analogies that were so serviceable along the way. He sees for himself that every agency acts for some end and that there is a necessity for every agency to act for an end. The perception of this general necessity is the metaphysical triumph, for examples and comparisons do not teach it even instinctively in any subhuman grade of nature or of art.

In a similar manner, the proposition fulminated by a prophet or laid down by Holy Church, together with the force it gains from accompanying miracles, is antecedent to the act of faith. It is a mere index to what has been revealed, an authentic exposition of the evidence that makes it believable. From that point on, the faithful direct their intellectual assent to the truths propounded, to the mysteries revealed inde-

³⁴ This paragraph sums up a footnote in the original Latin, with references to *De Gratia* (1946), pp. 375-402; *De Revelatione*, (1st edition), I, pp. 458-514; and to an Appendix in the volume we are here translating.—Tr.

pendently of the ecclesiastical summaries or catalogues, as well as of the miracles confirming them. The reason is simple. These accessories are extrinsic to the interior act of believing; and the light of faith which keeps shining through them, is now discerned at its proper central focus, namely, the truthfulness of God revealing. In this perspective we believe interiorly in God the Holy Ghost and in the Holy Catholic Church, not *e converso*.

Second Doubt. Children under age, untutored rustics, and a vast multitude are reputed to have the gift of infused faith, without showing any signs of their realizing what is meant by the formal motive of faith defended here, namely, the authority of God revealing, precisely as the author of grace.

Solution. Untutored people and the young are in possession of infused faith; and their faith is based on the aforesaid motive implicitly, even though individually their grasp of the motive is blurred. Self-analysis is progressive and always perfectible just because of its deficiency. Self-expression is proportionately difficult.

The manifest conviction of all the faithful in this: They believe in order to save their souls. None but the true faith guarantees salvation. To stick to the true faith is a command of God. They know this "from their pastors." They learn it from God's ministers. All the other Catholics believe it. So do they!

If, perchance, instruction is lacking, and through no fault of their own good, simple people, properly disposed, have no way of learning about the motives of credibility, there can be no doubt that God supplies the defect through his own interior light. This is as easy for him to do among neglected "civilized" communities as among infidels or barbarians, where conversions to the faith are genuine, through loyalty to missionaries and preachers, without the performance of miracles or the ability to weigh subtle motives of credibility.

Third Doubt. Do private revelations become truths of faith for those to whom they are addressed, when their content is evidently credible and their communication imposes belief? A certified case of the sort is that of St. Joan of Arc.

Solution. This much is certain: revelations of this kind do not belong to the deposit of faith binding equally all the faithful, even though they enjoy ecclesiastical approval. As for those who receive them, this is the doctrine formulated by Pope Benedict XIV in treating of the *Beatification of the Servants of God* (Book III, last chapter, n. 12). Once they are

certain it is God who is revealing, they have no alternative but to assent with firmness. Thus far, theologians are unanimous.

But the question next arises: Is that obligatory assent an exercise of the theological virtue of infused faith, or is it reducible to the gifts of prophecy or of the faith, which rank as graces *gratis datae*? (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:9.) Gotti and a handful of like authorities answer affirmatively concerning their rank within the confines of a theological virtue, since the same formal motive of faith is in operation, namely, the authority of God revealing. This makes their assent an exercise of theological virtue individually, but not on a Catholic or universal scale.

Applying this norm to St. Joan of Arc, had the soldier-maid rejected her private revelations she would have repudiated the formal motive of infused faith and with it all other truths revealed. As a matter of fact, she maintained that belief in her personal mission was identical, in her own soul, with belief in the mystery of redemption. This makes it clear why she appealed to the Sovereign Pontiff as the eminent judge having competency in the premises.

A different view is sustained by the Salmanticenses (n. 104). Private revelations, such as the Church is witness to, in our times do not belong to the formal body of faith, since they are not affected by the same unifying principle. They should be classified rather as prophecy. They are posterior to the common body of revelation rounded out through Christ, our Lord. Their theme is creatures or creaturely acts, not God directly, nor things to be regulated with immediate reference to God. Any approval accorded them by the Church is diminutive, not to say negative. Its general trend is this: the revelations under discussion contain nothing against the canonical deposit of faith. They may probably be divine. Human faith in them is not condemned. Neither is it aloof from rational criticism.

Once the prophetic light is withdrawn, as from the despised nun of Nevers who had been Bernadette of Lourdes, the fervor and faith that survive are a grace of the class *gratis data*. Certitude persists in the mind, but not always. Should the witness vacillate afterwards, Salmanticenses are inclined to hold it is not infused faith that is then dominating, but a faith that is human and has been gained or kept alive through the remembrance of an extraordinary grace enjoyed in the past.

Billuart bridges over these opposing views in a conciliatory effort. He contends that private revelations concerning anything pertaining to

God as author of the supernatural belong to faith as a supernatural, infused, theological virtue; but being private, they are not endowed with a universal or Catholic impact.

The position is susceptible of proof. In authentic private revelations one finds the same double formal object, *quod* and *quo*, of theological faith. What is lacking is the Church's official proposal of the revelations for common or Catholic acceptance. The desired proposal, however, is extrinsic and accidental, not detrimental to theological faith; for genuine faith of this kind was possessed by the angels in paradise before the fall, and also by the patriarchs and prophets, before there was any Church to think out or to originate scientifically-worded articles and propositions.

The Salmanticenses do not deny Billuart's thesis but they favor belief in a distinct and completed plenitude of revelation sealed long ago through Christ. One might call it a canonical body of revelation, just as the Scriptures comprise books, not merely inspired, but "inspired and canonical."

Private revelations in the Christian era, granting this plausible partition, are grouped rather generically with prophecy, a gift not too intimately connected with the Godhead, although commonly honored in the primitive Church as a *gratia gratis data*, inferior to the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:13).

Supplemental Comment.

The doctrine we have been threshing out is fundamental and of prime importance in its bearings on infused faith. In recent years certain theses prepared for the doctorate in theology have reached our hands. They profess to treat of the certitude of infused faith according to St. Thomas.

We have not seen fit to give them prominence owing to their unfortunate ignoring or failure to weigh the axial principle of this present study. They do not consider, because their authors did not appraise intelligently, the following principle, so intuitively captivating throughout St. Thomas: "Habits and acts are specified by their formal objects." But the perusal of the dissertations has invigorated our judgment in evaluating the sound doctrine of St. Thomas, as Thomists all do, and in ways accessible to our readers since 1918. As we pursue this present study we can hope for nothing better than to clarify and to emphasize the solidity of the Angelic Doctor's wisdom.

Having determined the formal object of faith, we have cleared the way for an investigation of its conditions—conditions affecting the object itself and conditions in the believers.

Article 2

*Is the Object of Faith Anything Complex after the Manner of a Proposition?*²

Statement of the question. As is evident from the history of this inquiry,¹ several related issues are involved: 1) Is the object of faith a divine thing, something simple, as a consequence; or is it complex, like a proposition which has a subject, an object and the connective *est* or *is*?

There have been theologians who asserted it is simple and divine, maintaining that Old Testament faith and Christian faith about Christ are identical. The ancients believed in Christ as one who would be born. Christians believe in him as one already born. The faith of both is the same, for faith cannot vary, as do language and propositions. Aquinas narrates their stand in these terms.²

Faith is always the same. This major cannot be abandoned. But articulate expressions of it change; as when Christians profess their belief in Christ's historic birth. For the patriarchs, Christ's birth was a future event: It will occur. But now it is past: It has occurred. Variations of the kind in expression make invariable faith different from complex propositions.

Were this stand rigorously defensible, it would guarantee the immutability of faith as a substructure underlying the development of all dogmatic formulas. Unfortunately, we shall be compelled later to discard three statements advanced in its favor, as objections to the truth. We here submit them briefly, in passing.

First, on the assumption that Prime Truth is the object of faith, it is immediately alleged that Prime Truth is not complex: therefore, faith cannot be complex. Secondly, this is our simple profession: "I believe in Almighty God"; not the complex fashion "I believe that God is almighty." Thirdly, the beatific vision grows out of faith. In it, God will be clearly seen, without any complexity. Therefore, there can be no complexity in the faith that prepares for it.

¹ Cf. M.-D. Chenu, O.P., *Mélanges Thomistes* (1923), p. 122.

² Cf. *Comm. in III Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 2, obj. 5-a.

2) There are those to whom St. Thomas also refers as claiming subjectively that the act of faith belongs to the first of mental operations called simple apprehension, rather than to the second, which is judgment, either component or divisive. Their adversaries were wont to respond that, to believe is to yield assent through a thinking process, and such a necessity implies an act of judging. Propositions always express judgments as complex, not simple things. There is a degree of appositeness in this line of reasoning which we shall utilize. For the moment, the presentation of the question is itself too involved to be passed over without being analyzed.

Scattered passages may be assembled from Aquinas' bearing on the moot case. St. Thomas thinks with St. Augustine that believing is assenting through a thought process. Mental assent can never be exercised except toward something that is true. Truth is grasped always in a complex manner through the cooperative agencies of intellects and words. This makes it inevitable that an object of faith should be something other than a complex truth. They who have spoken otherwise could not have understood what the term means.³

Nevertheless, Christian faith is a lineal descendant of Old Testament faith, and both faiths are one since they focus in Christ. The determination of time affects only things having an accidental relationship in the domain of faith. What is accidental or contingent in faith is not necessarily to be held as required for salvation, unless it has been so declared by authentic preaching or teaching. However, in his later treatise on truth, the Angelic Doctor affirms explicitly that the time factor is essential, and not merely accessory, when there is a question of Christ's birth.

The Angel of the Schools, in discussing truth⁴ put this inquiry into shape about the year 1258: "Is the faith of ancients and moderns," patriarchs and Christians, one and the same? Remembering that the distinction between Christ who has been born and Christ honored as yet to be born is essential, the perplexity dictating the inquiry urges the consideration of how unity can subsist between the faith of the Old Law and that of the New. Has it become imperative to revert to the view that had at first been impugned?

The explanation of St. Thomas is conciliatory. "Divine truth, which in itself is simple, is the object of infused faith; but the human intellect has to receive it in its own way and that way is composite." It is a cer-

³ Cf. *ibid.*, sol. 2.

⁴ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 12.

tainty that the act of faith is not a simple apprehension. It is a judgment and not a discursive reasoning process as De Lugo preferred to hold. The judgment incorporates the simple thing into itself as one of several component parts. Christ's nativity is the simple thing. Yet, the miscellaneous items entering into the mystery, within and without, may be expressed in numerous variable propositions round about the central focus: namely, Christ's birth itself, conceived as past or future, objectively, symbolically, etc. Christian faith accepts the Gospel as the only norm of Catholic belief in the premises.

Aquinas' Conclusion. The best setting for this problem is St. Thomas' maturer summary in the *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 2. We present its content in the form of a twofold conclusion: 1) At least the primary object of faith, considered as the thing believed in, is not complex but simple. 2) Our intellect, however, absorbs it after its own manner and casts it into forms of intelligence that may be expressed in variable propositions. Such are: the Messianic Servant, God's Son and Mary's, the Christ, has been born, has been given to us, and so on.

Proof of the First Part. The formal object of faith, *quo* and *quod*, is God—God who in himself is most simple. To put it another way: The formal object is Prime Truth, subsistent without complexity, in its essence, in its intelligence, in its utterance. Nevertheless, the secondary or derived object of faith can be complex, by reason of the multiple creatures involved.

Proof of the Second Part. A double phase is here presented. What commonly happens is to equalize the whole of faith with the act of assenting. That turns faith necessarily into a judgment, the second operation of the mind, the same as would result from a scientific finding or an opinion. But once recourse is had to a judgment, complexity is introduced, as connoting a proposition divisible into its subject, predicate, and connective.

Phase number two starts with a major: Things known are grasped by the knower according to the mode of the knower. But the mode of the human intellect is to assimilate truth as a thing susceptible of expression through propositions (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 85, a. 5). Propositions are either composite or divisive, assertions or negations. Therefore, our intellect attains to the most simple and incomplex object of faith by refracting it into forms that grow utterable as parts of a complex proposition.

The divine intellect is superior to all creaturely intelligences. It

knows all things in itself, as in their universal cause. Without complexity, it knows all things which by nature are complex. Thus, in knowing the quiddity or whatness of anything, God knows therewith whatever is knowable to us, by composition and analysis. What compels the human mind to compare, then to combine or to separate, is the handicap of learning everything normally through the senses. Ideas must be abstracted from phantasms to represent various aspects of the same thing; whence, it follows that the initial apprehension signally fails in gaining perfect knowledge about anything that is expressible.

The first impression, enabling us to discern the thing that is impressing us and to tell what it is, may be very vague or confused. Its whatness, however, its quiddity, is the first and proper object that is understood by the intellect. Once apprehended it is discerned with and through its properties and accidents. In a word, it is clad in a consistent array of memorable phenomena.

Its identity as a whole grows on us progressively. We get acquainted with its substance, in a general or confused way; then with the accidents in the same confused way; next with its substance in a particular and distinct way; thereafter with its accidents in a similarly improved way. At last we penetrate to its essence through clearness of understanding, by means of correct and piercingly distinct ideas.

Even our knowledge of God has to be built up, as it were, from the analogy of creatures—even our knowledge through faith. Revelation accordingly utilizes human notions and concepts naturally acquired, because of their analogical value. Such notions are nature, persons, fatherhood, especially as applied to the Blessed Trinity. But the triune God is most simple, and yet that infinite simplicity has to be parcelled out through many multiform ideas which challenge the capacity of propositions to convey. The ineffable God is one, infinitely true, good, mighty, just, and merciful.

Faith cannot make God known to us in any better way. The sight of Prime Truth, as it is in itself, is reserved exclusively for beatific vision (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2).

A doubt. A doubt might be raised to this effect: Just how far does the faith of a believer extend: to the articles of faith as expressed in language, or to the things and mysteries that are expressed in the articles?

In a word, the believer's faith does not stop at the articles of doctrine. It penetrates and embraces the substantial thing which they bespeak. "We do not form propositions except for the purpose of defining our

knowledge. This is equally true in matters of faith and science." Science does not stop at weighing ideas and propositions; it penetrates the things they represent. Otherwise science would not be real; it would be devoid of objective value. Ideas are but the medium in which an object outside the mind is known. They are mental words. The object which they reflect has to be intelligible to start out with. Through them it is perceived and becomes known. Thus, we both grasp the same truth, "You," through your concept or mental word, and "I," through mine.

Faith, in this respect, runs parallel with science. As a virtue it moves us to believe divine mysteries, the "deep things of God," the holy Trinity, instead of stopping at the dogmatic formulas through which we learn about them. And the progressiveness of faith is measured by the gift of understanding which penetrates dogmatic pronouncements and pierces higher up, through an elevation of insight into secrets buried and hidden away in God.

Subjectively, this is the normal process of infused contemplation. God sometimes permits temptations against faith itself to intrude, in order that, by the believer's experience in overcoming them, the soul's way may be made clear for passing through, above, and beyond the content of sturdy articles and formulas into the depths of God. There, faith's dark rooms acquaint the soul with negatives growing in power and potency, challenging adequate expression and, nevertheless, falling short of the beatific vision. The experience has to be spoken of in complex propositions, if only because it is ineffable. This is what is meant by faith's radiant black light, the blinding light, the enigma of mystic nights.⁵

Corollary I. The knowledge of God possessed through faith is essentially imperfect in its mode of representation. It is like an object in a mirror or something in the dark (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12). The imperfection is one of contrast with the beatific vision. The sight of God as he is in himself—that blessed vision—is the terminal of faith. But in all faith's forecasts nothing better can be furnished than dissolvent views or kaleidoscopic mosaics, as it were, which serve as the immediate materials for complex representations in concepts and propositions. The disproportionateness of the imperfection is due to the necessity of breaking up into complex refractions what is in itself infinitely simple.

⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 85, a. 2; the psychological background of this doctrine is in the replies ad 2 and ad 3.

Pause for a moment and reflect. Just as the human countenance can be monumentalized in mosaics, made of tiny angular pieces of glass or stone, so also the spiritual face of God is reflected in our limited concepts in a more or less fixed and figured way. This is our meaning.

In God, justice and mercy are identical. There is no separation, nor even a formal distinction between them. Our mind can see that this has to be. Nevertheless, in our concepts and speech, we firmly uphold God's inexorable justice, notwithstanding our inability to reconcile it concretely with his infinite mercy. In God both attributes are intimately united; but for us to behold the union we need to see God first as he is in himself. Only the beatific vision will suffice. Faith never can.

Corollary II. Many truths, which are expressible in a variety of propositions, may be known about the same divine reality: God is subsistent being; God is all intelligence; God is free. Although *ens* or being in the ontological sense is convertible with *verum* or the true, it is *verum* or the true which formally roots both of them in the intellect and flows thence into the propositions expressing them, when they are true.

Some true things are directly and simply revealed; others are virtually revealed. They are derivatives of the simply revealed. Yet it must not be urged that truths of the second order are susceptible of being defined as dogmas by the mere fact of their relationship with one and with the same divine reality as the simple truths of the first order. They concern the same thing, but they have not the same object. They fall into a different category by reason of their formal motive.

Truths that may be separately propounded about the same divine thing are furthermore diversified by the formulas in which they are couched. Like the concepts which they are shaped to express, they are divided into two classes. A set of formulas may be said, by participation, to be directly and simply revealed when they express truths of the first order. The second set is derivative, in expressing truths deduced by reasoning from revelation, which belong to the second order. This distinction is more important than it sounds.

A great number of theologians sustain a vigorous position because of it. Derivative truths and propositions are not specified by the same indivisible formal motive that sets simple and plainly, revealed truths apart. They are theological deductions and that quality makes scientific theology their formal boundary and motive.

A rather consequential issue follows. Holy Church may condemn

contradictory propositions as erroneous but not as purely heretical, if they are opposed to truths of the second category. Heresy would be committed only by refusing to believe truths of the first category.

Corollary III. The development of dogma illustrates how a single thing, a mystery, one and the same truth, may give rise to multiple expressions increasing in precision and perfection by their descriptiveness as time goes on. Under the Old Law, patriarchs, prophets, and people believed in the future birth of the Messiah, Christ. Primitive Christians believed in the same birth as a past event, which they comprehended in a new formula: "The Word was made flesh and we saw his glory" (Jn. 1:14).

The Incarnation formula grew historically into a special article running thus: "The Word, consubstantial with the Father, was made man." He assumed not only a body but a soul, thereby becoming what Apollinaris was loath to admit: "true God and true man." The variableness in descriptions is what makes up the so-called history of immutable dogmas. Strictly speaking, the history of a dogma—take the Blessed Trinity, for instance—is loose usage. What is conveyed by it is a study of the historical formulas about the Trinity. The mystery of the Trinity has no history. The indivisible triune *nunc*, the eternal present, "now," transcends history.

Corollary IV. Related to the same divine thing, there can be several habits diversifying its knowability. Natural theology, supernatural theology, faith, gifts of the Holy Ghost, the light of glory in heaven—all these mediums of learning are about the same thing as one thing, but not about the same formal object perceived through the same formal motive.

Article 3

Can There Be Any Falsity Imbedded in Faith?

Statement of the question. This inquiry has two phases. One concerns God revealing; the other, man believing.

First Phase. Can there be any falsity imbedded in faith on the part of God revealing? St. Thomas touches upon the issue in Objection 3, Article 3, Question 1 (*Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae).

The Priscillianists, admitting the lawfulness of lying, were set upon

holding that, absolutely speaking, God can lie and as a matter of fact, he sometimes does lie. In the fourteenth century, nominalists asserted that, owing to God's absolute power, he could speak falsely, but would not be lying. The falsity would not be a falsehood.

God is not obliged to tell the truth whenever he speaks. Three names are aligned with this error: Holcot, Peter D'Ailly and Gabriel Biel. Their thesis is a survival of absolute nominalism, whose vagaries make room for gross errors like the following: Nothing is of itself necessary; The distinction between moral good and moral evil depends on the divine pleasure alone. God could even require us to hate him, said William of Occam. Ripalda stood for God's freedom, through the use of his absolute power, to speak falsely in order to effect some good purpose. One way of so acting would consist in speaking of the nearness of the end of the world in order to frighten people into being vigilant.

1. Against the singular theses of these protagonists, theologians answer in common: God would not in any of these hypotheses be infallible. He would be without veracity; he would not be Prime Truth in essence, intelligence, and speech; he would not be God any longer. The end does not justify the means. Evil-doing is not to be resorted to for the accomplishment of good; nor should false things be spoken to bring about beneficent results. Lying is intrinsically wrong since the function of speech is to make manifest what is in one's mind.

2. We are refuting what is an heretical opinion that cannot be reconciled with the terse declaration of the First Vatican Council: "We believe because of the authority of God revealing. God cannot be deceived nor can he deceive" (Denz. 1789); "There cannot be any real disagreement between faith and reason, since it is the same God who reveals mysteries, infuses faith, and endows the human soul with the light of reason. God cannot deny his own utterances nor can he ever contradict one truth with another" (Denz. 1797).

3. In defining this doctrine, Holy Church is merely keeping in line with many scriptural passages. Most explicit are these two. "Is God a man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change?" (Nm. 23:19.) "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). The Fathers of the Church concur unanimously.

4. The position is strengthened through the absurdities to which opposite doctrines lead. If, absolutely speaking, God could lie, either immediately or through prophets, all that constitutes our faith would go wobbling into doubt.

Second Phase. Could there be falsity imbedded in the faith on the part of the believer? This means: Could a believer, under the influence of divine faith, elicit a falsifying assent, and hold to a conviction that a certain thing is true and revealed by God, which is not true and was not revealed by God?

This inquiry arises from difficulties that may be illustrated thus: 1) It appears that falsity may underlie hope, since many foster the hope of attaining to life eternal, which will never be theirs. 2) After the birth of Christ and before he began to preach, many falsely believed that he was still to be born. 3) It is possible for a communicant to believe that the Host received has been consecrated whereas it escaped being consecrated through the absent-mindedness of the celebrant.

Conclusion. It is impossible for an untruth to underlie faith, on the part of one believing. In other words, faith cannot bend one to give a false assent nor can it properly elicit an act of this kind.

Triple Proof. 1. Authority of the Church (Trent, sess. 6, chap. 9; Denz. 802). That one is in the state of grace "cannot be known with the certitude of faith by any individual, for faith excludes error." Whenever one's assent is an authentic act of faith, numerous declarations of Holy Church canonize it as infallible and immutable, because its motive power is the authority of God revealing and making it firm in its adhesion.¹ It will suffice to cite the First Vatican Council: "We believe because of the authority of God revealing, the authority of him who cannot be deceived nor can deceive" (Denz. 1789). Indeed, "of herself, the Church—in virtue of her admirable propagation, her remarkable holiness, and her inexhaustible fecundity in all forms of good works—in virtue of her Catholic unity and unconquerable stability, is a certain great and perpetual motive of credibility, an indestructible witness to her own divine commission. That is the reason enabling her . . . to impart certitude to her offspring . . . and to communicate the stanch spirit with which Catholics are sustained in professing the faith as resting on the surest of foundations" (Denz. 1794).

The motives of credibility assembled here are listed from the historic field of phenomena that includes all and only truths that can become known through natural resources. To their persuasiveness there is an additional factor accruing from assistance furnished from above. This is why those who have accepted the faith through the magistracy of the

¹ Cf. Denz. 428, 460, 468, 706 ff., 725, 1637 ff., 1656, 1789 ff., 1794, 1815, 2025, 2079 ff.

Church will never have a just cause for changing it or calling it into doubt. St. Paul's exhortation is to the point. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope for he is faithful who has promised" (Heb. 10:23).

2. *The theological proof is twofold.* One part is based on the common principles governing intellectual acts. Aristotle's observation carries. "No virtue that perfects the intellect is compatible with untruth." But faith is a virtue that perfects the intellect. Therefore, there can be no untruth underlying faith.

The major is clear, for the intellect is advanced in perfection precisely because virtue is an operative habit for good. It ordains the intellect toward its own good, which is truth itself. Untruth is a positive evil for the intellect. [It is comparable to crippling in the body.] Applying this principle, a habit of science cannot be a principle of error. [It is an intellectual virtue.] A mathematician may indeed err through adding too fast; but the man's mistake and possibly the unreliable habit that led to it are a detriment to science, not a derivative or effect ascribable to mathematics as science. In the same way, imprudence in judging is not the result of prudence; neither is injustice in acting a product of the virtue of justice.

The minor premise, "faith is an intellectual virtue," is substantiated this way. Although mere human faith may have an admixture of falsity from the fallible testimony of humans, which defect debases it below the intellectual virtues themselves, nevertheless, divine faith cannot be so handicapped. Quite the contrary, resting as it does on divine testimony, it is infallible, particularly when it is living and made perfect through charity. In this perspective a collateral assertion may be in order. In mathematics it is the mathematician and not the science of numbers that errs; but in historical matters, not only the historian but history itself may be untruthful.²

3. The second part of the theological proof is based on the properties of infused faith. Nothing can underlie any power, habit, or act, apart from the formal motive or the formal element in its object. But the formal motive of faith is Prime Truth revealing, which bars the possibility of any falsity in its root. Therefore, in the believer infused faith cannot be imbedded in untruth, nor vice versa.

The major premise of this argument shows manifestly that infused faith inheres in its formal object immediately without the exercise or

² Both parts of the theological proof are based on the *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, aa. 2, 4-5.

need of discussion. St. Thomas makes it clear: there is nothing underlying a power or habit or act except through the medium of its formal object. Color cannot be seen except in the light. Nor can the conclusion of a demonstration be grasped without a middle term.

But if faith were discursive, so as to reach Prime Truth revealing only in a roundabout way, then Prime Truth would not be its formal motive. The radical cause, or motive for believing, would not be God, the author of revelation; it would be the axis or principle most dominant in the argument, namely, a truth naturally knowable either through metaphysics or history.

To go further, if faith were discursive, it would not attain infallibly even to the principle of its own discursiveness, which would be the authority of the Church confirmed by miracles. It could err in the discernment of miracles. It could even mistake a diabolical facsimile for a miracle. Our Lord's warning covers the case. "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets who shall show great signs and wonders, inasmuch as to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Mt. 24:24).

Corollary. Great attention is needed to distinguish between the formal motive of infused faith and a motive of credibility. The formal motive of faith is Prime Truth revealing—in other words, God revealing truths—and into God's authority our infused faith fits infallibly and without deviation, believing conjointly Prime Truth itself together with whatever mysteries it communicates.

The motives of credibility are quite different. They are signs of revelation—particularly miracles. But most of the time the rational identification of miracles proceeds with moral certainty only, with no more solid basis than questionable historical knowledge. From what has been said, there can be no doubt that it is a most grave aberration in philosophy and theology to confuse the formal objects of human habits, whether of the sciences or of virtues, acquired or infused.

A most important issue, among many important ones, is wrapped up in this clear incisive statement of the Angelic Doctor: "The species of any habit depends upon the formal element in its object. Remove that formal element and the specification of a habit must vanish."

The contrary opinion of Cardinal Billot cannot stand. It runs: "Supernatural and natural habits are not necessarily distinguished by their object."³ If they are not, then the formal object of infused faith can be attained without grace; but in such a contingency, its attainment cannot

³ Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis* (1905), p. 84; cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 3.

pass as infallible. Any man, believing with a motivation not known in any better way, would lack infallible certitude concerning divine mysteries on the supernatural level, and also concerning miracles, so considered, in the inferior light of reason. The authenticity of miracles is not easy to establish.

The doctrine of this article is reinforced through our replies to the following objections.

Objection I. Hope is a virtue; yet there may be a false element underlying it. How many hope to enjoy eternal life who never will. What is to prevent a like false element from underlying faith?

Reply. The comparison is misleading. Hope is a virtue lodged in man's appetitive faculties which formally seek the good, not the true. Thus, it turns out *per accidens* that virtues located in human appetites are compatible with deceptive leads. One can love a man out of charity, through the esteem one has for his holiness, though he be a hypocrite. Similarly, the giving of alms, through compassion for a beggar's supposed neediness, may be directed toward a culprit who is well off. But faith is anchored in the intellect whose formal object is the true. Not even *per accidens*, as the Angelic Doctor indicates, can falseness enter there; it is excluded totally.

As a matter of fact, speaking *per se*, there is no room for falsity in hope if it is a theological virtue. No believer is exercising the infused virtue by hoping to arrive at eternal life through his own power. That would be presumption. The goal is to be reached "with the assistance of grace, through perseverance, in which one will inevitably and infallibly reap life eternal."

The certitude of hope, as we will bring out in a special section later, is the sureness of the way we are actually wending. It is not the sureness of salvation achieved which will begin where the way stops. "In like manner the subjective virtue of charity aims at loving God, in whomsoever he may be. After that, it matters little *per se*, whether, in particular instances, God is or is not in a neighbor whom one loves for the love of God." We ought to love even sinners, notwithstanding God's absence from them. Charity impels us to plead that God, if absent, may take up his abode in them through grace.

Objection II. Intellectual virtues can include error. Prudence is an intellectual virtue which at times is deceiving. If one is not aware of the unusual strength of a particular wine, he can become intoxicated by

carrying out the principle of prudence: "This wine is to be consumed moderately." It is just as easy for faith to lead astray as prudence or any other intellectual virtue.

Reply. The major needs to be distinguished. Prudence is an intellectual virtue of the practical order, not of the speculative order. If it were of the speculative order, it would have to measure up knowingly and completely to the reality of whatever it has to judge. This necessity would bar the ignorance of the wine's strength.

Assuming that the alleged ignorance is invincible, the consumer, without fault, conscientiously applies a principle of prudence, duly recognized as a practical virtue. His decision is correct insofar as it is based on the requirements of a well-regulated appetite and right intention. He erred in the perception of a speculative truth, not in the exercise of a practical virtue.

The case illustrates the difference that separates speculative truth from so-called prudential truth. The latter brand is restricted to the practico-practical or exclusively practical order. Faith is just as exclusively speculative and is rooted in the speculative order to which the speculative intellect, not the will, is commensurately conformed.⁴

Objection III. It is just as easy for faith to err speculatively as for prudence. Hence, the difficulty remains. Between Christ's birth and his public preaching there were many who believed that he was still to be born. It was a speculative error in which righteousness of action was in no way compromised; yet, the reality of Christ's birth was implicitly denied. Therefore, faith can be rooted in speculative error.

Reply. The Angel of the Schools touches upon that period of history as being covered by faith in this universal fundamental form: at some time or other the Messiah is to be born. The particular generation of believers referred to, accepting the traditional profession, was not aware that at that epoch the formula, but not the truth expressed, had weakened subjectively into a human conjecture. Therein they were deceived, but not by their faith. It was as if a grammarian should, though rarely, speak ungrammatically. The cause of his error is not his knowledge. It is his inadvertence or diverted attention.

Objection IV. Owing to its bearings on practice, faith can err *per accidens*. There is no doubt about faith compelling us to believe that the Sacrament of the Altar contains Christ's true body. And yet accidentally, it may happen that Christ's true body is not there. The cibo-

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 3.—See hereafter q. 4, a. 2.

rium was not consecrated validly because of distractions that bewildered the priest. In a case of this kind faith errs, and *per accidens* the error is in the practical order. Later on it will be brought out that faith is not circumscribed by the speculative order. Faith is eminently speculative and practical at the same time. Its mysteries are speculative, but its precepts are practical.⁵

Reply. Aquinas emphasizes that the faith of believers is not directed toward these or those sacramental species taken by themselves, but toward the presence of Christ's true body under the appearances of bread, once it has been duly consecrated. "This is the practical slant of Eucharistic doctrine. Christ is to be adored in consecrated hosts." If perchance there has been no consecration—for what seemed to be consecration was invalid—it is not faith that has erred, either *per se* or either speculatively or practically *per accidens*. It is another case of practical prudence that has lapsed through a speculative error.

Metaphysically, the situation is not repugnant. Theologically, the procedures are virtuous. The virtue of prudence need not have been defective, owing to the conscious employment of diligence as a moral obligation. Such an accident can be entirely involuntary, so that the conviction, "These hosts have been consecrated," is falsified by an oversight or by ignorance, for which nobody is knowingly responsible. All things considered, the practical judgment is right: "This being the Blessed Sacrament, I adore Christ's body" concealed therein. I am prudently making a well-regulated act of theological faith, absolutely and not conditionally. Moral certitude about the validity of the consecration is all that is necessary. Indeed, moral certitude, which is always open to rare exceptions, is the proximate and admittedly sufficient norm of conscience, governing individual human acts as they are determined upon for performance here and now.

Faith's dictum is irrefragable: "Consecrated hosts are to be adored." As a rule its impact is universal. Therefore, nobody incurs guilt, even accidentally, in reducing it to practice.

Objection V. But no answer, thus far given, obliterates the possibility of error in believing, when particular expositions of the faith are inexact or incorrect. If certain events of the past were repeated or imitated, bishops in isolated regions might formulate teaching to be accepted as divine faith, without its being revealed or even true.

Reply. The faithful thus deceived believe in error based on human

⁵ Cf. below, p. 271.

authority only; hence, the faith they profess in it can be only a human faith. They do not assent to what is asserted and proposed by their bishops because God has revealed it. They assent only because they wrongly believe that God has revealed it. Their inability to distinguish between what, among themselves, they accept on divine authority and what they accept on human authority, makes them like numerous others whose limitations keep them tied up in knots in spite of themselves. If a metaphysician is fascinated by a false opinion, the opinion ought not forthwith to be ascribed to metaphysics, but to the man deceived by his fascination.

The good faith of many Protestants is of a kindred mixture. Because of an unsuspecting ignorance, which can be fully involuntary and furthermore invincible, they see no difference between their belief in the Incarnation of the Word of God, derived ulteriorly from infused faith, and whatever else their ministers teach them. Accordingly, they are led to uphold various positions, guided only by human faith in their leaders. Outstanding among the miscellanies is the denial of infallibility as a papal prerogative, even when the Sovereign Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*.

Good faith, so palliated, is not infused faith. It is either ignorance or error—for the most part invincible and perhaps totally involuntary. Sincerity is not lacking, but truth. The "unleavened bread" of Christians needs both (cf. 1 Cor. 5:8). Therefore, wherever there is question of genuine infused supernatural theological faith, there can be no trace of intrinsic error. It is excluded by reason of the formal motive, namely, Prime Truth revealing.

Article 4

Can the Object of Faith Be Seen?

(*De Veritate* q. 14, a. 9.)

Statement of the question. Obscurity is a condition involving the object of faith. We consider in this article its immediate evidence, deferring to the next article the investigation concerning whether the things of faith can become known through the indirect evidence of demonstration.

It could be averred that the object of faith may be seen on familiar grounds: 1) Our Lord addressed the apostle Thomas unequivocally:

"Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed" (Jn. 20:29). 2) St. Paul states expressly: "Now we see through a glass in a dark manner" (1 Cor. 13:12). 3) After all, faith is a kind of spiritual light and something is seen wherever light is detected, even from a flickering lantern. That fact impressed St. Peter when he warned, concerning the "prophetical word" of true faith: "You do well to be attentive," for it is "a light that shines in a dark corner till the dawn of day, when the day star rises in your hearts" (2 Pt. 1:19).

The response. Neither faith nor opinion has anything to do with things that are seen through the senses or the intellect in the identification of formal objects. Faith has reference to things "not seen." We are here restricting our view to divine mysteries taken in themselves individually. We are not ignoring the so-called extrinsic evidences of credibility for the common stock or body of revealed truth. We are fastening attention on a doctrine that binds *de fide* regarding supernatural mysteries which, of themselves, belong *per se* to the object of faith, and we shall analyse them precisely because they belong to the object of faith.

1. The first proof is furnished by St. Paul: "Faith is the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. 11:1). It brings conviction about mysteries of truth hidden away in God. For this reason it is said to "bring into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). There is room for comparison with human faith insofar as the latter is not steadied by objective evidence, but by the authority of the speaker.

2. The authority of the First Vatican Council is definitive (cf. Denz. 1789). Faith is there declared to be a "supernatural virtue whereby, thanks to the inspiration and assistance of God's grace, we believe what he reveals, not because we see the intrinsic truth of the things, but on account of God's authority in revealing."

This is an assertion of our adhesion to what is believed, not because we see it, but because God has revealed it. This is not, however, the same as claiming that the truth of faith is not seen by anybody. Only mysteries, supernatural in themselves, defy creaturely insight. It is with them that we are dealing. A pertinent situation was cleared up when Pope Pius IX condemned the semirationalists for maintaining that the mysteries of faith, once they have been revealed, are open to demonstration.¹

"Mysteries concealed in God are proposed for our belief, that is, mys-

¹ Gunther and Frohschammer were semirationalists (cf. Denz. 1655-1666). Letters of Pius IX and the First Vatican Council, sess. 3, c. 4, Denz. 1795 ff.

teries that could not be known unless they were divinely revealed. . . . The nature of these mysteries so far exceeds the grasp of created intelligence that, even after having been revealed and believed in, they continue to be 'covered as with a veil,' by faith, and are kept 'wrapped up in some degree of darkness as long as our journey through this mortal life lasts. We are at such a distance from the Lord!' Not even through mystic contemplation can a soul arrive at "seeing God as he is." This was the doctrine of the Beghards who were condemned by the Council of Vienne (cf. Denz. 475). A formula of the council specifies their error in the words of a denial: "The soul has no need of the light of glory to lift it up into the vision of God for the enjoyment of God in beatific glory." The common doctrine of theologians excludes every loophole: "Neither Adam, nor the angels on probation, saw God as he is. Even the most exalted intellectual visions of the Blessed Trinity, such as those described by St. Teresa, fall short in establishing a claim that the Holy Trinity has been seen, in the strict and proper sense of the term, as if the interior secret mysteriousness of the Godhead had become evident. What really happens in experience—St. Teresa personally explains—is the infusion of a mental species or supernatural idea which at its best does not surpass a created representation. It is only through beatific vision that God is seen as he is, without any intermediate species, either impressed or expressed, for no created species can represent God as he is in himself."²

3. *Theological Proof.* Only those things are said to be seen that are sufficient of themselves to move either the intellect or senses objectively into knowing them. But the object of faith cannot of itself sufficiently move the intellect or the senses objectively into knowing itself. Therefore, the object of faith cannot be anything that is seen.

Generally speaking, the articles in St. Thomas are so constructed as to ascend through a minor to the major and thence descend to a conclusion. The major we have given is put second to the minor. It is an induction. Sensible objects are seen whenever they are placed, so as to move the sense of sight sufficiently, of themselves. Similarly, axioms or the first principles of reason are said to be seen, because, of themselves, they move the intellect sufficiently to adhere to them. The same is true of a conclusion. Once it is demonstrated, it is said to be seen in its principles. This means that, through the medium of principles, it gains in evidence to the extent of convincing the intellect of anyone who consid-

² *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 2.

ers it both objectively and sufficiently. It is seen in being understood.

Our minor premise results from the opposition that exists between faith and vision or science. A thing believed does not of itself move the mind sufficiently to be seen in itself. We choose freely to assent to it because of extrinsic testimony or authority bolstering it up. If this were not so, the object of faith would have to move the understanding sufficiently to rank on a par with sight, vision, or science. Nobody is so confused as to hold that this takes place.

The act of assenting to faith, or to an opinion, is deliberately decided upon by the will, under whose influence the intellect freely bends toward one factor of a contradiction, to the exclusion of the opposite one. In this relation, the difference between faith and opinion lies in the degree of determinateness. Faith is certain and, unlike opinion, has no fear of being wrong.

In human faith the situation is obvious. We believe what others tell us, without seeing, without otherwise knowing. All we ask is that our informers be competent and honest in what they communicate. There is no difference between divine and human faith on this score. In divine faith we believe mysteries hidden in God, unseen and otherwise unknown, on the authority of God who reveals them. They are divine secrets, never seen outside of heaven. They are the object of beatific vision. Here below, the Apostle's sense is clear: "Faith is the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. 11:1). Let the above suffice for the argument based on theological authority, which is involved in the definition of the name "faith" as opposed to knowledge or science.

Corollary. The act of faith is free, not only as an exercise but also as to its specification.³ By comparison, an act of science may be freely exercised or not, according as a student determines willfully to consider or to ignore a demonstration presented in his textbooks. But the scientific act of considering is bereft of liberty as to its specification, because it is not possible, in appraising the force of an apodictic demonstration, to close one's eyes to the truthfulness of its conclusion.

The objects apprehended through faith work differently. Such objects are the Trinity, predestination, the Incarnation, eternal penalties, life everlasting. Alone and by themselves they are never so intellectually compelling that one's understanding must either assent, dissent, or suspend judgment, in virtue of themselves as a cause. Indeed the believer, metaphysically, may suit himself and choose arbitrarily either to assent

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 17, a. 6.

or dissent, so free is he. This is in strict conformity with what we have written elsewhere. In the realm of faith the intellect assents to each truth revealed, not because it is moved thereto by a distinct and proper object of knowledge, but by a personal choice bending him voluntarily toward one part of alternatives rather than another.⁴ Psychically, the Pharisees, after beholding Christ's miracles, were so displeased by the Master's preaching as to use this freedom most dangerously in a variety of degrees. [We believe not. Do they? I am not willing to believe. I am thoroughly unwilling. I am going to disbelieve and contradict.]⁵

Against Hugh of St. Victor it is expedient to inquire: In the state of original innocence did our first parents know God in his essence? The Angelic Doctor answers in *De Veritate* (q. 18, a. 1).

The different insights of the blessed and the faithful on earth are not measured as more perfect or less perfect degrees of clarity in seeing. The light of beatitude and the light of faith are contrasted as vision or seeing, and not seeing at all. As long as Adam walked the earth, he was only on the way to beatitude. The essence of God was always beyond his ken.

As for St. Teresa's Seventh Mansion (chap. 1), the intellectual visions of the Blessed Trinity, which go with transforming union, operate "through a characteristic manner of representation." Her description signifies nothing more than infused ideas. No such representations convey the sight of God as he is in himself. In fact, no created species whatever can represent subsistent intelligence, which God's essence is.⁶ The soul remains always on the level of faith, where the Trinity's essence cannot be seen, properly speaking, except through an inadequate infused image.

It is true that Christ said to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed." But Thomas, seeing one thing, believed in something else. What he saw was Christ the man. What he believed in was Christ as God. His profession cannot be gainsaid: "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28).

This same rule of discernment is applicable to the mysteries of the Rosary. Every *Ave* bears on the life of Christ; and the Christ-life has two distinct elements, visible and invisible. The visible elements radiate outwards from the sacred humanity: The invisible have to do with Christ's divinity. The incidents in the dolorous passion were enacted

⁴ Cf. below, pp. 156 ff.; *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 452 ff.

⁵ St. Thomas draws out this doctrine more at length in *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9; q. 18, aa. 1-2; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 1 ad 1.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 2.

before the eyes of all; but nobody could see the spiritual value of Christ's infinite merits that grew out of his divine personality. In like manner, the Church of Christ bears visible marks but her intimate love-life with God is a secret unseen.

The evidence of credibility. Although the mysteries of faith cannot be seen in themselves individually, nevertheless, as a body of truth that is credible, their credibility is evident. In that sense they are said to be seen by one who believes. Nobody would believe without perceiving that what he believes is believable. This conviction may be based on the evidence of miraculous or other signs such as the persuasiveness of a preacher's holiness. It may also result from the influence or help of grace moving one from within.

At all events the conclusion is developed at length in apologetics.⁷ It is enough here to cite the First Vatican Council: "If anybody says that divine revelation cannot be made credible by external signs, and therefore, a believer is moved toward the faith only and exclusively by his own interior experience or private inspiration, let him be anathema" (Denz. 1812). Other canons protect against related aberrations. "If anyone says that miracles are impossible, even those narrated in Holy Writ, and that they should all be relegated to the fictions of fable and myth; or if anyone says that miracles cannot be known with certainty and that they do not carry the force of proof for the divine origin of the Christian religion, let him be anathema." Both miracles and prophecies are most signal proofs of revelation; their believableness is evident.⁸

"To the Catholic Church alone are applicable the numerous and wonderful divine dispositions that banish all doubt, through the evidence they contribute to the credibility of Christian faith." There is no room for skepticism. The expression "evident credibility" is part of the Church's own language.

The Church's teaching about the evident credibility of the mysteries of faith has its backing in Sacred Scripture. The Psalmist rejoices because "Thy testimonies have become exceedingly credible" (Ps. 92:5). Christ's peerless stand could not be more emphatic: "I speak to you and you believe not. The works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me" (Jn. 10:25).

The evident credibility of the mysteries of faith is proved from reason in apologetics. Whatever is affirmed by reliable witnesses and con-

⁷ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 515 ff.; (3rd edition), pp. 281 ff.

⁸ Cf. Denz. 1812, 1813, 1790, 1794.

firmed by suitable signs is admitted to be evidently credible. But the mysteries of faith are of that brand. The witnesses who affirm them in the name of the Lord are reliable. They are the holy apostles who sealed their commission by welcoming death by torture. The suitability of the signs which pass as their credentials has a divine impact.

Prophecies and miracles continue from the period of the apostles until now, and no one but God can produce them. The marvelous conversion of the world to Christianity, and the wonderful life of the Church with its fecundity in all kinds of good works, plus its four marks, each one of which is a moral miracle—all these signs converge as the accomplishment of what Christ foretold.⁹

The combined evidences of credibility are a necessary condition for supernatural faith. The proof can be put briefly: The assent of faith is an act of virtue. It ought therefore to be prudent and consonant with reason. But prudence dictates that nothing be firmly believed in, unless evidence makes it credible. Therefore, the mysteries of faith which we are ordered to believe most firmly must be evidently credible.

The major premise is obvious and it is sustained by a declaration of the First Vatican Council: "That the service of our faith may be in harmony with reason, God willed to join with the interior aids of the Holy Spirit, the external proofs of his revelation in the form of divine facts. Foremost among these credentials rank miracles and prophecies which, by their nature, clearly show forth God's almightiness and infinite knowledge. That makes of them most certain signs of divine revelation accommodated to the grasp of every intelligent mind" (Denz. 1790).

The minor premise is proved from Holy Scripture: "He who is hasty in believing is lightheaded" (Sir. 19:4). It is also proved from reason: Nothing is knowable if its knowableness is not evident; nor can a thing be judged probable without evidence of its probability. Therefore, for a thing to be reasonably credible there must be evidence of its credibility.

The last two classes of evidence are widely different from each other. The evidence of probability moves the will to cling to a position with a degree of fear that one may be wrong. The evidence of credibility moves the will to cling so firmly to what is believed, that no fear of being wrong can be entertained. If alleged credibleness fails in dispelling all fear of erring—if its evidence does not certify, but only guarantees a probability—nothing but an opinion is engendered in the mind. There is no act of faith.

⁹ Cf. *De Revelatione*, II, chaps. 7-9 ff.

On that ground, a proposition of the modernists denying that miracles as such can be discerned has been condemned. The assent of faith was wrongly made to depend on an assemblage of probabilities (cf. Denz. 2025). Pope Innocent IX had already reprobated the doctrine that "the assent required for supernatural faith and useful for salvation, is consistent with a knowledge of revelation that is only probable and coupled with fear, even with the fear that God might not have spoken" (Denz. 1171).

At least moral certitude is demanded, relative to the reasoned credibility of the mysteries of faith.¹⁰ Children and the uneducated are not capable of anything better. It is enough for them to have the particular degree of evidence which lies within their grasp. Very often they show an experience of divine assistance over and above. Normally speaking, at least moral certitude is requisite and sufficient to make credibility reasonable.¹¹

Objection. The children of Catholics and heretics alike believe what they learn from their parents and pastors, even when sufficient credibility is missing. Neither group can be exercising divine faith in the admixture of false doctrines which both profess. Not even Catholic children, in the premises, can have the certitude they need from the testimony of parents or pastors.

Reply. There is no parity between the children of heretics and those of Catholics.¹² The testimony of a Catholic pastor expresses the judgment of the universal Church. The non-Catholic minister is echoing only the judgment of a particular sect; perhaps nobody's judgment but his own. Subsequently, the child born in heresy, on examining the trustworthiness of his sect, can get abreast with its falseness; whereas the Catholic offspring, should he apply his diligence in investigating scientifically the credibility of Catholicism, will always find it true. He will be confirmed in the faith by the judgment thence ensuing.

Evidences of credibility. Under this heading objections will be answered against the compatibility between the evidences of credibility and (1) the obscurity of faith, (2) the liberty characterizing the act of faith, and (3) the supernaturalness of faith.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 524.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.* (5th edition), chap. 15, aa. 2-3.

¹² Cf. *ibid.* (first 2 editions), I, p. 533.

¹³ This section is an abridgement of what we have presented more at length in *De Revelatione* (1st edition), chap. 15, a. 4; (1st edition), pp. 541-50; (4th edition), pp. 506-12.

1. It must be borne in mind that the evidence of credibility is extrinsic to revealed mysteries. It is intrinsic evidence that is wanting and makes them obscure. The evidence of credibility does not issue from the intrinsic truth of the mysteries, which depends on the connection between subject and predicate. It is furnished by external signs or proof that go no further than to certify that the alleged mysteries belong to the deposit of revelation. Through that identification, the mysteries do not of themselves part with any of their obscurity.

To illustrate the intimate connection between subject and predicate cannot in itself be perceived in the following propositions, outside the beatific vision: God is triune; Jesus is God; Christ's merits are infinite; Baptism produces grace; man's goal is the beatific sight or vision of the divine essence; the pains of hell are just and eternal; God wishes all men to be saved without predestining all men to salvation. In every case, the object of faith is obscure and does not of itself suffice to move a believer. This is the result of its truth not being known as it is in itself. It has to be believed on the word of a witness confirmed by miracles.

2. Is the same thing true of the prophets? A prophet is said to be endowed with prophetic light, which qualifies him to see the evidence of mysteries, not indeed in themselves, but as they exist in the testifying Spirit. The experience really amounts to gaining, through prophetic light, a knowledge of divine revelation from its own proper effect impressed immediately on the mind. It is true that liberty in believing what thus happens is nil. No liberty is left for the prophet to deny he has received a revelation and that the communication bears on the Trinity, predestination, or some other mystery that is handed down as a part of the common deposit of faith. But the content of the mysteries is in itself obscure and will continue to be inevident, until the fatherland is reached. Only in heaven will it be clear how, for example, the mystery of predestination is consistent with God's universal will to save the world.¹⁴

So long as the divine mysteries remain obscure, faith in them is metaphysically a matter of free choice. Nobody is forced to believe against his will. But at the same time faith retains its supernatural excellence, for the virtue depends formally and intrinsically not on the evidence of credibility, but on Prime Truth revealing in a dark manner mysteries that are believed altogether.

3. A *Doubt*. If the light of faith does not enable one to see the object of faith, then what is its function? The light of faith, being an infusion,

¹⁴ Cf. below, pp. 322 ff. See hereafter q. 5, art. 2.

shows what must be believed. Certain codices of Aquinas bear a marginal note that runs: The light of faith "enables one to see what are believed to be believable truths."

It certainly is not the meaning of St. Thomas that the infused light of faith makes faith's mysteries evident. His words voice the contrary. Taking it for granted that a prophet has fulfilled his commission by making an announcement and that the Church—which alone has exclusive competence to pass judgment on revelations, true or false—upholds him, as it were, canonically, the Angelic Doctor volunteers a comparison. Just as in the cultivation of other habits of virtue, man reasons out and sees what is suitable for his improvement in accordance with those habits, so also in dealing with the habit of faith, the cultured mind yields its assent to everything that is consistently becoming for the adornment of righteous faith, eliminating whatever is inconsistent and unbecoming.

The position of St. Thomas is based on the principle that every good habit impels only toward actions that are good. A chaste person, for instance, without any acquaintanceship with moral theology, judges rightly, almost by instinct, concerning unlawful conduct and things one must not do. Abstemious men discern the suitability of refraining from excess in eating. Clear perception is involved growing out of a virtuous inclination to which an appropriate form of abstinence is adapted.

Introduce the virtue chasteness, for example, and thereupon springs up a relationship between the person and chaste things. One's treasure reveals his heart. Every man's voluntary goal matches his personal tastes; he would not have it otherwise.¹⁵ Let the habit of faith be infused, there is sure to grow out of it a liking to bring everything in life into line with Christian rectitude, cost what sacrifices it may. But that is no proof, nor even a sign that faith has imparted sight into the secrets of mystery, focusing in the Blessed Trinity, predestination, and the rest. These divine marvels will be obscure always. Human sight in their regard is that of owl's eyes. There can be no hesitation about clinging to them and bending all that can be intelligently controlled into that grasp, as Cajetan says, "discreetly." The result will achieve, by experience, a reinforcement of the arguments of suitability and the theological conclusions, which are a kind of created atmosphere encompassing the human concepts of the Trinity, Incarnation, and predestination.

Whereas the infused light of faith cannot furnish evidence about its

¹⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Ethics*, III, chap. 5.

most exalted object—its dazzling splendor is too blinding—it does, nonetheless, throw light, after a fashion, on the motives of credibility—shining on them, as it were, from great heights. It actually invigorates the reasoned conviction of their credibility. “Through the light of faith, the faithful see that mysteries should be believed.”

Cajetan observes that “the habit of faith makes evidence possible for itself.” It certainly lends confirmation to the five ways of proving God’s existence. As we shall show later, the gift of understanding extends to all phases of our belief. An outstanding particular is the obligation to believe definite truths explicitly to start out with. It often happens, as Cajetan states, that “God helps on the enlightenment of the mind unto the strengthening of moral certitude about the credibility of the mysteries of faith.”¹⁶

Nevertheless, grace is not absolutely necessary for the certitude which, of itself, belongs to the natural order. Miracles will do. They are accommodated to the understanding of all. They may be recognized as evidence even by those who resist God’s grace and commit sins against the Holy Spirit. Such were the Pharisees on whom our Lord made the charge: “If I had not done among them the works that no other man has done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father” (Jn. 15:24).

The malice of the priests in the synagogue was of the same piece. After the miracle worked by Sts. Peter and John, they admitted: “There is no hushing it up. They have done a miracle that is known to the whole populace in Jerusalem. It is so manifest we cannot deny it. But to keep it from spreading farther, let us threaten them, that they speak no more in this Name to any man” (Acts 4:16-17).

If it be asked whether the obscurity of faith is a condition *sine qua non* in its acceptance, or whether it belongs to the formal element *sub quo*, inherent in the virtue itself, the answer is brief. It is only an inevitable condition. The formal element, motive, or principle of faith is not its obscurity, but the authority of God revealing. Objectors appeal to the opposition between science and faith to establish an incongruity, namely “evidence is the formal object of science. Hence, obscurity must be the formal motive of faith” should retreat.

Evidence is a perfection. It impels positively toward assenting. Darkening or obscuring is the opposite. It tends toward neutralizing or pas-

¹⁶ This matter is discussed in the preceding article and will be taken up again in q. 8, a. 4 ad 2; cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 532-38.

sively negating intrinsic evidence. It is quite otherwise in face of external evidence. Obscurity must succumb.

Article 5

Can Things That Are of Faith Be Known?

Statement of the question. This inquiry has to do especially with natural truths when revealed, rather than supernatural mysteries. The term "known" should be construed as meaning "scientifically demonstrated." The principal difficulty at stake is this. Is it possible for the same thing to be known in itself and believed through faith, under the same aspect at the same time? Theologians do not agree. Their disputations evolve negative and affirmative answers. The negation is defended by St. Thomas, all Thomists, and Scotus. The affirmative side is upheld by Alexander of Hales, Sts. Bonaventure and Albert, and Suárez. The disputants fall into four groups, three of which are partitively affirmative, the fourth being exclusively negative.

The affirmative groups hold that faith and scientific knowledge can exist together in the same subject; first, to the extent of their respective acts: "I believe it and I know it besides" (Suárez, Vásquez, Valentia, and De Lugo agree on this; moreover, they incline toward admitting still other combinations for stronger reasons); secondly, to the extent of their habits that are conceived as being mutually compatible (Aravius represents this group); thirdly, the habit of either one is claimed to be compatible with the act of the other (this view is supported by Cajetan, Conrad, Bañez, and John of St. Thomas). Capreolus is wedded to the completely negative contention that faith and scientific knowledge in the premises cannot coexist (cf. III, d. 25, q. 31, a. 3).

Our defense will be for the thesis of St. Thomas: It is impossible for the same thing to be formally known and formally believed at the same time.

1. St. Gregory the Great supplies proof. Things that appear or are evident impose recognition or acknowledgement, instead of faith. They are either seen or known, not merely believed.

2. It is a sound theological argument that whatever becomes known is seen in some way, at least in definite principles. But in the preceding article it has been made clear that there is an incompatibility between

the sight of an object and the condition for its being an object of belief. An object that is only believed in, of itself has not sufficient force to compel assent without a determinant act of will power. Clear-sightedness into a truth does not require the additional compulsion to assent. Therefore, it is impossible for anything to be a formal object of sight and of belief at the same time.

In brief, the reasoning is this: What is seen cannot be an object of belief, strictly speaking. But whatever is known is seen, at least in given principles. Therefore, the same thing cannot be formally known and formally believed at the same time. Virtually, only an unseen thing can be believed. This is why faith is exercised always on obscure or unseen things.

This demonstration holds directly for acts of faith as differentiated from acts of science or knowledge. The two cannot coexist in the same mind about the same thing, although Suárez thinks and says they can and do.

A passing flash of the beatific vision would be incompatible with a simultaneous act of faith in the same. It would not however abolish the habit of faith. The cause of the incompatibility of the two acts is the oppositeness, first between dim light and bright, and secondly between liberty and necessity. The mental act of believing proceeds in a dark manner and is free; but the act of knowing is evident and inevitable. These characteristics appertain to their respective specifying objects. The opposition turns out to be privative and contradictory.

Only "an unseen thing is believed in." The principle of noncontradiction itself imposes the conclusion: These two acts, knowing and believing, cannot be exercised in the same intellect at the same time, about the same phase of anything. Light and darkness do not mix. When I see a neighbor actually talking, I am not moved to believe in his existence because of what others tell me. If I know that they are telling me he exists, I do not mind their testimony. I see the fact for myself.

In the same way I no longer hope for what I possess. "Hope that is seen is not hope," says St. Paul. "Why should a man hope for what is visibly present to him?" (Rom. 8:24.)

The reasons of suitability (*convenit*) affecting mysteries of faith "are not demonstrations in any sense. Their gist is that of persuasions manifesting that, whatever is correctly proposed in the name of faith, is not impossible." There is no such thing as showing the intrinsic possibility of any divine mystery. The best a human intellect can do from its own

resources is to show that objections alleged against it are either false or futile.

In contrasting formal acts of belief and positive knowledge, the doctrine submitted here is true equally for habits of belief and knowledge about the same identical object. They cannot coexist in the same mind. It is repugnant to reason to have habitual evident knowledge and habitual inevident knowledge about the same object, coexisting in the same intellect—just as it is repugnant to elicit transient acts of thinking and believing concerning what is simultaneously evident and inevident. The habits, like the acts, are privative and opposite; they are contradictory. For example one may not claim to be charitable while remaining supinely in the habitual state of mortal sin.

With formal objects pulling in opposite and incompatible directions simultaneously, the very concepts representing them are mental aberrations devoid of reality. A case in question is St. Paul's rapture. The flash-like experience of the light of glory could not have been infused as a habit (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 175, a. 3 ad 3).

Objections to Opposition between Acts of Faith and Science or Knowledge

Suárez contends there need be no opposition. There is no incongruity in admitting that the same intellect may know the same truth both clearly and obscurely, by reason of a difference in the mediums furnishing the knowledge. The roundness of the earth is an instance, since it is proved in different ways with different degrees of clearness by physics and by mathematics. But an act of faith and an act of knowing are mental processes accruing from energies that serve as distinct mediums. Therefore, there is no unsuitableness in having them operate together, no more than in having physical and mathematical operations in the same mind at the same time, each showing in its own degree of strength that the earth is round.

The major advanced by Suárez, admitting the compatibility of distinct mediums is true, provided the mediums are not infected with a privative or contradictory opposition to each other. If they are so infected, the major cannot stand. Relative to the mental processes of believing and knowing, they would be compatible but for their privativeness and contradictoriness. Clearness and obscureness are mutually exclusive. The minor collapses.

As for the proofs of the earth's rotundity, let them be worked out as pure mathematics, or corroborated by astronomy during an eclipse, or studied in physics by the observation of a ship across the horizon showing only its sails. In no case do the mediums or resultant proofs intrinsically cancel or collide with one another; they converge and confirm cumulatively instead of contradicting. The Thomistic position remains unscathed.

It can happen, however, that a philosopher who knows demonstratively that God exists is also aware that the demonstrated proposition is *de fide*; it binds in faith. But on his part, in accepting the demonstrated truth, he is not applying to it the formal motive of supernatural faith. He does not need to. His loyalty to the faith is guaranteed by his knowledge and vice versa. Thomists speak formally; Suárez speaks materially.

Suárez persists. When a pagan philosopher who rightly assesses the proof for God's existence is converted, he is obliged as a Christian to believe what he previously knew. St. Paul is emphatic: "Whoever comes to God must believe that he is" (Heb. 11:6). The Council of Trent interprets the believing as an act of faith. And yet, the convert cannot part with the actual evident knowledge that he possesses about God's existence. Only one conclusion is possible. The same truth is known and believed by him simultaneously.

Reply. The existence of God is a preliminary truth; therefore, something prior to faith. It is a truth that cannot be dispensed with. For this reason, converts or others who are incapable of grasping "the ways" of proving God's existence must believe it as a mystery. This is all that St. Paul's words impose! Believers who may have no scientific knowledge about God's existence as author of nature, nevertheless, opined favorably, even though weakly, about it, before conversion. Through conversion their grasp grew stronger in being based on the authority of God revealing and on the impact of signs confirming this fundamental background for the whole of faith.¹

There is something more special to be maintained if St. Paul were referring to God not merely as the author of nature, but as the author of grace. Philosophy cannot climb so high. St. Thomas considers both phases. The supernatural phase, God existing as the author of grace is enfolded in the doctrine that the prime credibles, so to speak, the first truths of all to be believed, in which all other articles of faith are contained, are the Pauline pair: (1) God is and (2) he rewards those who seek him. But God, the container of all supernatural mysteries, is here

¹ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 9.

honored not as the author of nature, but of grace. In this respect, humans may prove the unity of God as the author of nature—but not the unity of the Trinity, that is the unity of essence subsisting in the trinity of persons, which belongs to the order of grace.

Objection. What an unsuitable consequence follows! A philosopher who is converted has less certitude about the existence of God as author of nature, than an untutored peasant or rustic. He knows of God naturally, whereas the uneducated Catholic believes in him supernaturally. The incongruity is obvious.

All absurdity vanishes, however, once the reasoner perceives that the existence of God, the author of nature, is a preamble to supernatural faith, affecting faith itself, as it were, only *per accidens*. This particular truth lies completely within the field of reason. The philosopher has nothing to fear from loss of merit, since his interior disposition is such that he would unreservedly believe the truth in question, were he not already in possession of it through knowledge. He excels the unlearned in rational perfection by this fact. His natural certitude is within the domain of reason; but once he accepts the faith, although this single truth is yielded to, because of intrinsic evidence and not positive authority, his certitude concerning it is improved by his faith, since rational certitude is perfectly conformable to all higher certifications springing from faith.

The doctrine, "God is," enters into every definition and proclamation about God implicitly; and it gains a share of reinforcement from every decision and proposition bodying forth the Church's teaching about God; his triunity; the Incarnation; Christ's kingly priesthood and judgeship. The habit of faith cannot but strengthen the inferior grade of certitude. Even though the philosopher is too well informed concerning the actuality of God as nature's author to accept it as a belief on any pure authority, he is, nonetheless, duly aware that it is ingrained in the formulas of Church councils, which is enough to qualify it as being "of faith."

Generally speaking, a superior habit intensifies an inferior one and refines it after the manner of charity—dignifying the moral virtues through its influx into them after they have been acquired. Supernaturally enlivened by charity, self-discipline, through the exercise of the moral virtues, is supernaturally meritorious. This could never happen were charity absent, no matter how sturdy and reliable the acquired virtues might become through individual cultivation.

That the same intellect can comprehend the two distinct habits of

knowing and believing the same truth simultaneously is erroneously held to be possible because of a naïve comparison. Faith may be likened to the sun, and science or knowledge to a candle, but nothing need prevent the sun and a candle from shedding light on the same object together.

This is indeed true; but the sun and the candle both radiate pure natural light, although in different degrees. Faith has in itself more and higher light than knowledge could ever generate; yet, it gives forth less, because of obstructiveness veiling it in darkness. Now the obscurity or darkness is an inseparable something in the faith itself. This is not the case with sunlight and candlelight; they dispel darkness. Faith wraps itself up in it. The comparison misses its aim.

Opinion and a habit of science or knowing are resorted to to substantiate the opposition. Opinion involves a degree of obscurity; yet, this does not expel it from the mind that knows. Nor does evident knowledge obliterate the obscurity of the habit called opinion. Why should it be held to thrust out faith?

The assumption that objective science and opinion are not mutually repugnant is false in the premises. They cannot coexist about the same object. Their definitions show why. Accurate thinking requires what is scientifically known to be considered so fixed that it cannot be other than what knowledge represents it to be. What is merely opined is conceived as being possibly other than what opinion chooses to consider it. Now it is clear that the same mind cannot be at one and the same time certain and uncertain, with fear that it might be erring and simultaneously without any such fear when there is question of a single object.

It is true that one may be intellectually convinced by demonstration that what he holds to is certain. It is also true that he may assess several other different arguments in its favor as probabilities. But the probable arguments do not strengthen or weaken his adherence to what demonstration has made perspicuous. He understands them but has no use for them.²

To no purpose is St. Paul's rapture dragged into the present discussion. Habits of faith and habits of sight, as habits, are what we are holding to be incompatible. The Pauline rapture was not a habit. It was a transient experience without any antecedent deliberation. It may even have been swift and instantaneous. At any rate, Sts. Augustine and Thomas agree in claiming it to have been different from anything that may be called a habit. Paul was passive during it and had not a single

² Several less important modes of objecting are resolved in *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9.

thing to decide, in causing, controlling, or modifying it. His habit of faith suffered no detriment from it, least of all by dissolution. The vision itself was a sudden experience that Paul described personally in the words: "He heard . . . I know not how"; but the impact is that of an isolated experience.

Hence, Aquinas points out that there were not two habits, faith and vision, lodged in St. Paul, on the occasion. There was only one habit: faith. The vision passed as an act.³ The case, therefore, cannot nullify our thesis.

Perplexity engrosses certain minds concerning how St. Paul could have retained the habit of faith while experiencing his rapture, even though the rapture was a flash-vision. Was not his faith totally dissolved by it, at least momentarily? He saw!

In general, no natural habit precludes the possibility of a contrary act. There is no formal opposition between the rule and its isolated exception [which is currently said "to prove" it]. Effectively, and by way of a disposition, there can be an interference. The habit may produce an individual act which offsets the contrary act, because of a formal opposition between the separate acts. A meek man may be driven to a sudden outburst of anger. A stone that is held stationary by the force of gravitation can be shot upwards in a violent blast.

There is no denying that contrary forms tend to expel each other if they grow forth from some perfect and permanent state. But St. Paul's rapture had nothing of such normalcy about it. It is probable—only probable—that the Apostle experienced the light of glory with flash-like suddenness, like a sunburst, or like the productive operation of grace at the moment a sacrament is administered and received worthily.

Be that as it may, there was no concept left in St. Paul's mind to represent the divine essence. In his staggering remembrance of his rapture into the divine essence, he had received no mental species whatever of what he saw. What was left over was a bewildering void. It is described by Gonet as a certain impervious resplendence of the light of glory that lingered afterwards as a percept of the experience. In that case the percept itself was the equivalent of created vision. It was the inextinguishable memory of a grace that was extraordinary from every angle.

The Apostle's words leave no room for doubt. He had been caught

³ This is the express reasoning of Aquinas in his *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae q. 175, a. 3 ad 3.

up into paradise where he heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4). The lifelong memory of this peerless experience was not incompatible either with the habit of faith or with any single act of faith.⁴

Special interest has been centered in the following query: Is it possible for the heralds, forerunners, or divinely appointed witnesses of mysteries to behold the evidence of the mysteries, on the one hand, and to keep their obscure faith in the mysteries on the other?

It seems that the evidence which heraldic messengers or prophets receive need not be intrinsic to the mysteries themselves [any more than a telegraph messenger's certitude needs to extend to the contents of a sealed telegram. The messenger does not know what the telegram is about. His certitude is extrinsic. It bears formally on delivering the right envelope to the right address. He may even be in the dark when witnessing a code, as when a telegram is read, word for word, over the telephone.—Tr.]

The certitude bolstering up belief or faith in a divine message about mysteries is not the mere fact of correct transmission, nor even the personal insight which a prophet might have into the spiritual meaning of what he announces. It has to be something which convinces the recipient that the communication comes from God. This can only be by the evidence of an accompanying miracle.

They who, with Suárez, sustain the compatibility of faith with its obscurity, and the intrinsic evidence of certain truths otherwise believed in, are decidedly firm in holding that divine witnesses are a class apart and, more than others, are outstanding proofs of their contention.

Bañez is one who denies that witnesses can have the special evidence assumed, short of the beatific vision. The common run of Thomists, however, are disposed to admit its possibility, since the divine Revealer can accord evidence to his witnesses through some internal, as well as by any external effect.

Take, for instance, the first in rank among the angels when they were created. That masterpiece of divine workmanship, supernaturalized by grace for its probationary decision, had certain and evident knowledge that its own enlightenment had to be from God alone. Similarly, prophets discern the divine origin of their prophetic sight.

Let David tell it: "The Spirit of the Lord spoke to me . . . the God

⁴ Gonet presents other less important objections with their solutions.

of Israel said to me, the strong One of Israel . . . the ruler of men . . . as the light of the morning when the sun rises, shines without clouds" (2 Kgs. 23:2-4).

By a like providence, the Blessed Virgin, on learning that she was not to bring forth her child in nature's way, was illumined by the clear evidence which Gabriel possessed concerning the unborn Christ's divinity. Parallel cases of infused enlightenment and certitude were Lazarus, after he was restored to life, and the apostles, whose election made them the first doctors of Christian faith.

Gonet deserves to be consulted on this subject, in company with Thomistic leaders. Cajetan, Ferrariensis, Alvarez, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, Billuart, John of St. Thomas—these authorities hold as probable that the divine intermediaries invoked in this discussion, without detriment to their infused faith, were dispatched on their missions with a degree of evident insight into the mysteries they were charged to announce. Bañez and Victoria, however, deny the probability.

Thomistic doctrine is accurately formulated thus: "Whoever is favored with the evidence of a divine communication—this is what is meant by a witness's evidence—can simultaneously possess faith as regards the thing witnessed to and, nevertheless, know clearly and evidently that God, who can neither be deceived nor deceive, is speaking to and through him in a proper literal sense." This is at least theoretically possible.

Proof is available from St. Thomas. If a prophet predicts a future contingency in the word of the Lord, and in connection therewith performs a miracle, let us say, by restoring a corpse to life, the seer's own intellect will be convinced by this sign that he is truly speaking in God who does not deceive. And yet, the future thing foretold has not become evident to him in itself. That state of affairs leaves the veil of faith in the prophecy quite secure. The prophecy is held to with certainty as a divine revelation; the content is sure, whatever it may mean, but it has not been made evident in itself. [Jonas proves the theme.] Extrinsic evidence does not take away from the dimness affecting the hidden interior evidence as a privation. This is the reason why anybody capable of giving an obscure assent to the teachings of faith is thoroughly capable of believing. [Jonas believed.]

In the concrete order we may exemplify by considering the Incarnation, predestination, or the Blessed Trinity. These mysteries have been proclaimed; but not one of them has been made evident, either in itself,

in its cause, or in its peculiar effect. The proclamation is external to the mystery and does not increase or detract from its truth. It does not manifest the mystery's content even when calling it by name. The characteristic factors of the mystery remain secret, except for the labeling: "God said this" and "it must be believed."

The force of our reply is rooted in the absence of internal evidence whenever divine mysteries are revealed. The absence is particularly significant when we consider the higher grade of mysteries, those classified as secret and hidden in God—*arcana Dei*. Their imperviousness can be due to their impenetrable supernatural essence, high above all concepts, as in the Trinity; or to the challenging absolute contingency, which operates infallibly, according to the unlimited freedom of God's good pleasure, as in the predestination of Peter rather than Judas.

Granting that a servant of God has a pacifying insight and unshakable certitude concerning the divine origin of the revelation bearing on predestination, this does not prevent the mystery from remaining most obscure in itself. The quandary is real: If out of sheer mercy God wishes all men to be saved, how is it that, with the power of his will, so many are not saved? And if God predestines some, but not all, how can he be said to will the salvation of those who are not predestined? Even though in God justice and mercy are identical, so that through mercy some are predestined and through justice others are not, how can God's mercy be said to be exercised in the case of the unpredestined?

All must agree with Bossuet: Predestination is an inscrutable secret of God. We have hold of two extremities, but the rest of the chain vanishes into an intermediate abyss. Nevertheless, the two extremities are certain. They were expounded in the Council of Quierzy, France, held in the year 853: "First, that anybody should be saved is a gift (from God). Secondly, all who perish, deserve it" (Denz. 318). But between these two extremes remains the problem of how to reconcile God's mercy and justice in face of what happens. How can the God of mercy permit the catastrophe of final impenitence?

The obscurity that cannot be torn away from faith without undoing it is, nonetheless, translucent. It shows that no kind of knowledge along the road to heaven can tower in excellence above the infused contemplation of revealed mysteries in the darkness of faith. Great indeed is that darkness, when compared with all that is above it. Contemplation through its black nights cannot proceed argumentatively. It mounts

through the Spirit of God's Word above all that is written, and above all commentaries expanding the inspiration of Holy Scripture.

While the angels were on probation in paradise, they had faith. The sovereign angel among them all was endowed with heraldic evidence. He could not but perceive that he was superior to all other spirits and could not be advanced in enlightenment except by God. His singular situation proves that faith, on the part of witnesses, must be compatible with evidence.

We single out here two of the more salient objections raised against the Thomistic thesis. The first states: Believing cannot continue to be a free act in the face of the compulsion issuing from a rigorous demonstration that the thing believed in is absurd. But the evidence accorded to divine witnesses is equivalent to a demonstration of the sort. It has compelling force, to this effect: "If the revelation I announce is not true, then God is lying." With such evidence the seer's faith is stamped out. The conflict is between absurdities.

An answer given above will here bear repetition. It applies to the major. The alleged demonstration by way of an absurdity does not touch the interior elements and factors of the mystery believed in. If it did, the major would stand—as Rosmini wrongly thought it should—for anybody who would side with Rosmini in demonstrating the Trinity through the absurdity of its denial. But the demonstration does not work that way. Its rational force does not reach beyond what is predicable of all revealed mysteries in common. God has pledged his word for them; therefore, they are true. The major is undermined.

In a word, since the medium of demonstration, instead of reaching the core, has, of itself, no internal effect and no weight, except externally and in common with all mysteries, the intrinsic character of the mystery persists in remaining obscure. The relation between its subject and predicate is unchanged. So far is faith in it from compelling or being compelled, that the mere presentation of the mystery for the reflection of proud men excites their displeasure.

Antagonists loathe the thought of taking the mystery of gratuitous predestination for certain souls and not for all, the mystery of the cross, and that of eternal punishment seriously. They thus show how free they are to line up with the voluble Pharisees and indulge their self-expression, as it were, at random: "I am unmoved"; "I shall not bother"; "I will not believe"; "I am determined to disbelieve"; "I believe the contrary."

Such an elastic use of freedom induces the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost. Christ's contemporaries committed it. Because of this free choice, they stifled, through their wickedness, the faith that would have made them free. Their charges against Christ were appalling: "By the prince of devils he casts out devils" (Mt. 9:34); "We know that thou hast a devil. . . . They therefore took up stones to cast at him" (Jn. 8:52, 59). Other opponents wondered: "Can a devil open the eyes of blind men?" (Jn. 10:21.) It was faith on principle that was stirring and being stirred [blindly or otherwise]—faith without intrinsic compulsion, however, albeit faith duly proved by miracles.

The following is second objection against the Thomistic position: Just as in the ways of proving God's existence the procedure is *a posteriori*, so also in what a prophet announces, the seer, on looking back, may gain *a posteriori* evidence from the message of mystery that he has transmitted. At that moment, faith in the message ceases; it yields to understanding.

Thomists deny the parity. The proofs of God's existence constitute a body of clear, sane reasoning, running back from perspicuous controllable effects which none but God could have designed and started and kept running. It is not the same case with revealed mystery. All that can be certified about a sacred mystery is that it belongs to the deposit of revelation. God spoke it. It must be believed, even though sealed.

If proud men spurn the claim, they cannot be compelled interiorly to believe—as might happen by an impact comparable to a demonstration. They remain free to choose even the contrary course of hatred and denunciation: "I do not believe"; "I will not believe"; "I choose determinately to disbelieve"; "That alleged mystery is from the devil."

And yet, reprobate demons, through acquired faith, may antecedently have been forced into accepting the mystery because of the accompanying compulsory signs. It would be foolish for them to blind themselves to them. They steer clear of the folly. They believe in spite of themselves. Lucifer "quakes for dread." He blasphemes.

By way of résumé, the doctrine concerning obscurity in the object of faith may be condensed in two syllogisms: 1) Whatever, of itself, suffices to move either the intellect or sense perception has to be seen. But an object of belief has not of itself the power to produce either intellectual or sense movement. Therefore, whatever is believed, cannot be classified as seen. 2) But every object that is known by reasoning is seen to be true from its principles. It is seen in the principles. There-

fore, whatever is formally believed cannot be knowledge of such a brand, simultaneously existent in the believer and affecting the same aspect of a given truth.

Accurately speaking, the object of faith is unseen in itself; this fact explains the keen and exquisite experiences of passive purification which St. John of the Cross calls the night of the spirit. A principle of Aristotle applies, as the Carmelite mystic observes: "By how much the more exalted truths soar as intelligibles, by so much do they escape from the range of limited human intelligibility. Their altitude is increasingly remote from and above the restrictions imposed on human understanding by the yoke of the senses." Truly, the mysteries of Godlife are infinitely beyond the compass of all that Aristotle could have had in mind (cf. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, II).

Consequently, the dark manner in which holy mysteries appear affords no justification for theories about their absurdity or incoherence. [It is due to the blinding "inaccessible light" in which God dwells (cf. 1 Tm. 6:16) and whence they issue.] St. Teresa was motivated by sound theology when she wrote: "My devotion grows the more it feeds on the higher mysteries of faith because of their greater obscurity." The obscurity grips and outstrips rational evidence. Coming as it does from inaccessible splendor, it is more like a translucent black light, very aptly styled "night." It is the adequate object of contemplation.

Article 6

Should the Truths of Faith Be Distinguished Through Separate Articles?

A clear explanation of this subject is demanded for a correct understanding of the dogmatic development in the framing of articles for belief.

Statement of the question. Negative positions seem tenable to some:

- 1) All things conveyed by Holy Scripture are of faith. This prevents them from being parceled out into a number of separate articles.
- 2) Even though it did not prevent parceling, the separateness between groups of truths would be only material, not formal. Once material divisions begin, they go on multiplying indefinitely through analytical disintegration from twelve to twenty, to thirty, and to more numerous

points of faith as they become objects of interest materially, each in turn, even microscopically.

None but the affirmative position is correct. It is suitable to distinguish the truths of faith through articles.

Proof I: From authority. The Apostles' Creed and the lengthier symbols of Church councils employ this method for a threefold advantage: 1) It makes the instruction of the faithful easier. 2) It establishes uniformity of grasp among believers on a large scale. 3) It furnishes ready reference to the profession of faith in the presence of heretics.

Proof II: From common theological reasoning. Many things that coalesce as a unit in God retain their multiplicity in human intellects, since man's knowledge matures through the processes of composition and division (cf. above, Article 2). For this reason a simple truth of faith remains undivided in God and yet becomes known to reason through diverse refractions, like the elements of a proposition; or through insets, like the particles in a mosaic, which fix and harden the details of all that can be uttered in numerous descriptive propositions.

Proof III: From more particular theological reasons. Etymologically, the term "article" is accepted by Aquinas as running back to the Greek form *arthron*. The sense thus derived is that of joining or fitting together parts that are in themselves distinct, and yet adapted to fit into one another.¹ But in the object of faith there is discerned a variety of matchings that are possible between the parts or truths that are joined. Of such kind are those classified especially as being unseen by us, and yet having a very important positive relation with faith itself. Therefore, the distinction of articles enfolding various truths of faith is very proper, if only because they may be presented in categories of individual unseen truths, on the one hand, subordinated to the superior comprehensiveness of one objective faith, on the other.

The major premise amounts to a nominal definition of the word "article," which is open to illustrations from the joiner's art, from the physical joints in the human frame, and from the admirable adjustment of correlated articles in the questions of the *Summa theologiae*.

The minor premise reposes on a thesis already worked out: The object of faith is not seen, it is obscure. For this reason, the special character of being unseen, arising from the obscurity inherent in mysteries as such, adds its own degree of difficulty to the act or habit of believing. Thus, it creates for itself a special title to pass as a matter of faith.

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 6, corp. and ad 1.

But the generic definition of the word "article," specifies, as of greater importance, that, prior to the consideration of whether their content is seen or unseen, these obscure truths, being revealed, belong to faith anyway; and have a power, so to speak, of bringing into line with themselves other less important objects of belief—made to fit into them and be made one with them through subordinate functioning.

Thus, in several historical creeds there are two outstanding articles: Christ's passion and resurrection: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate. . . . on the third day he arose from the dead." Two special obscurities diversify these articles: a suffering God and a corpse living over again. These obscurities offer distinct difficulties for beginners in believing. Yet, in the three connected verities—Christ suffered, died, and was buried—there is only one difficulty in common. The enumeration of articles is according to distinct difficulties, but that need not be done too rigorously. What are commonly put down as twelve articles of faith become fourteen when more scientifically divided; but the master truths remain as only three: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption.

Hence, the Angelic Doctor observes that, primarily, the distinction between articles of faith has more to do with their revealed relations to faith itself than with their relation to other things—their being seen or not seen, for instance. He makes a comparison with the sciences.

Scientists distinguish easily between things intended by nature directly and by-products; between things seen, of themselves, and things whose main utility is to manifest something besides themselves. When faith is at stake, essential truths ordain us directly toward life everlasting—heaven first! Such are truths pertaining directly to the Godhead, the Trinity, the Incarnation.

But with regard to scriptural faith concerning Abraham's two sons and the miracles of Elias and Eliseus, these and numerous other like truths pertain to faith really but only secondarily, inasmuch as they have no direct connection with life eternal, which is faith's ultimate goal.

In the strict formal sense, therefore, an article of faith should be defined as follows: It is a Catholic proposition, dealing primarily with faith itself and expounding a topic which presents a special difficulty in believing.

Corollary I. Not every proposition of faith is an article. Only the principal propositions have that rank.

Corollary II. The natural truths of religion, even when conveyed

through revelation, do not become articles of faith. They lack the special obscurity of revealed mysteries. They may even be demonstrated.

The unity of God is such a truth. Being demonstrable and demonstrated it is a preamble of faith, a radical truth presupposed to faith and to all articles of faith, without being an article of faith itself.

On the other hand, the creation of the world at the beginning of time is an article of faith. It is a truth that cannot be demonstrated. It was a free act of God who could have created the world from eternity, time included. In that case there would not have been a historical beginning. It is not the supernatural character of the world or of time, but their contingency that baffles their factual demonstration. This double mystery of time and the creation of the world at its beginning resembles future contingencies that cannot be known without being revealed. [All God's secrets are of this sort.]

Corollary III. Certain articles of faith may be deduced from other articles. The infinite value of Christ's merits in his passion is a consequence of the hypostatic union which began at the Incarnation.

It would be erroneous, however, to hold that a theological conclusion is a derivative of this kind, or that it could be defined as a dogma of faith. The admixture of a purely reasoned element stands in the way of its mysterious part, even sufficing to qualify it as a dogma of faith entitled to be formally defined.

There is no parity between a derivative article of faith and a theological conclusion in this respect. The article derived has to be otherwise formally revealed, albeit implicitly. The same is not true of the theological conclusion. Instead of being a simple revelation, the conclusion is only a simple deduction from a revelation. It is disconnected, therefore, from the formal motive of faith. Its own proximate formal motive is theology.

Holy Church, however, can issue an infallible condemnation of a contradicting theological conclusion, stigmatizing it as erroneous, though not necessarily heretical. Father Marin-Sola has been called to task by Father Schultes, O.P., for having overlooked the seriousness of this distinction.²

Corollary IV. One must beware of confusing theological conclusions deduced from articles of faith by sound reasoning, with real truths of faith, which are of subordinate and secondary importance. That Abra-

² Cf. R. Schultes, O.P., *De Ecclesia Catholica* (Paris, 1926), pp. 632-35; *Introductio ad Historia Dogmatum*, pp. 197-203.

ham had "two sons" [among several others] is a truth of faith in the formal sense and not merely a rational deduction (cf. Gal. 4:22). Scripture emphasizes it as a peculiar historical providence. Reason has but to believe it. [Compare Gn. 25:1-4.]

Corollary V. One must take a stand against certain recent scholars who have erred in confusing truths of a secondary order which pertain to faith, such as the double offspring of Abraham with other truths belonging to faith only indirectly.³ The Doctor and Patron of the Schools explains: Truths pertain indirectly to faith whenever their denial involves a break with some article of faith. That unfortunate result happens only because of their connection with faith. It may occur in the disparagement of theological conclusions. If the denial of any theological conclusion brings about the negation of a proposition that is of faith, even indirectly, the delinquent may well be suspected of heresy. Nevertheless, as Fr. Schultes points out, the following canonical notes of censure were not so clear-cut in the days of Aquinas as they have since become: namely, (1) heretical; (2) near-heresy; (3) suspected of heresy; (4) erroneous.

In conclusion, there are three descending grades of truths and propositions which clear-sightedness dictates should be kept unmixed: (1) articles of faith which are capital truths, each with its special brand of obscurity; (2) less important truths of faith simply revealed, at least obscurely, like the capital articles, and yet deducible from them because contained embryonically in them; (3) theological conclusions, not revealed absolutely speaking, but deduced directly from some truth of faith in which they are contained potentially. The infused knowledge of Christ is an instance. It was distinct from the beatific vision and yet coexisted with it in Christ's mind, without detriment to or from Christ's other experimental knowledge.

Article 7

Has There Been Any Development in the Articles of Faith from Age to Age?

Statement of the question. A rather stirring controversy in the modern era concerns the unchangeableness of dogma in the face of note-

³ Cf. *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 11, a. 2; Ia, q. 32, a. 4.

worthy progress in the better understanding of it. Long ago Aquinas proposed the key to its solution in answer to the question chosen for the title of this article.¹ But St. Thomas does not concentrate exclusively on periods of time that have elapsed since the deaths of Christ and his apostles. Differing from the moderns, his sweeping view goes back as far as primitive revelation and covers the complete succession of ages from then until now.

On this universal background, the Angelic Doctor establishes a sound doctrine. He is not blind either to the seeming propriety of denying that there has been any increase in the number of properly defined articles, nor to the reasons volunteered in supporting the denial: 1) Has not St. Paul declared that faith is "the substance of things to be hoped for," with direct reference to the immutable things promised in every age? The immutable things are life eternal and the attainment of salvation through grace. 2) The teaching of faith is not a human invention; it is a divine tradition. It originates with God in whom there is no defect of knowledge. Surely it is apparent that God must have delivered a perfect revelation from the beginning. 3) An operation of grace, like an operation of nature, has to start from perfect principles. How then could God have created the perfect man he did, without bestowing on him faith in a most eminent degree, since that would be an importunate need for the instruction of posterity? 4) At least in the Christian era, which budded forth in the apostles, those inaugurators possessed such a fullness of instruction in holy mysteries that the articles they transmitted have not achieved completeness through any later ones, because they do not need to. St. Paul conveys the secret of this providence to the Romans: "We are in possession of the first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23). A parallel condition worked out in the Old Law. Instruction in its greatest fullness for respective periods was at first communicated to the earlier Fathers and patriarchs.

In parceling out these views, St. Thomas is far from solidifying them as they stand. The Angelic Doctor shared the same conviction expressed by St. Gregory the Great: "In successive periods of time, the knowledge displayed by the Fathers of the Church was bound to blossom and fructify. And yet the nearer Fathers were to Christ's immediate generation, the clearer and the fuller was their perception of the mysteries of salvation." Old Testament fathers progressed toward a like fullness, the nearer their generation came to the advent of our Lord.

¹ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 185-90.

Although the historical Jesus was the central focus for all generations, there remains something to straighten out systematically in the divergent degrees of progressiveness in opposite directions before and after him, leading up to and away from him. A distinction is in order.

Aquinas' conclusion. The articles of faith have not grown in their substantial content from age to age; but they have grown through intelligible expansion and development. We shall first elucidate this doctrine and then consider its specific impact on the body of faith as propounded by the First Vatican Council.

First part of the distinction. There has been no increase in the substantial content of the articles of Catholic faith. The four introductory arguments summarized above furnish the basis for this assertion. On Psalm 50, St. Augustine states very pointedly: "Times change, not faith." St. Leo preached concerning the Nativity: "The Apostles published what the prophets announced. That which was always believed, took place in the night."²

The theological argument grows luminous as presented in Article 7 (*Summa theologiae*, IIa, IIae, q. 1).

There is no substantial increase in the doctrine of faith, if, as contended, all truths of faith are implicitly contained in the first two which were revealed from the beginning. But they are; all articles of faith fit into the primal pair: "God is" and "He rewards all who seek him." Therefore, there has been no increase in the substantial doctrine of faith.

The major is clear if, as here intended, the doctrinal substance of faith is accepted in the sense expressed by St. Paul in his declaration to the Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for" (Heb. 11:1).

The comment of Aquinas is reliable. The term substance is customarily applied to the very first intrinsic beginning of anything, especially when the whole thing that matures is virtually contained in this initial principle. The complete substance of science, for example, is commensurate with the axioms or self-evident, and therefore indemonstrable, principles with which science starts out. All that science can unfold is wrapped up in their virtue from the beginning.³

The minor premise shares in the inspired force of St. Paul's warning: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God

² St. Leo, *Sermo III de Nativitate*, chap. 4.

³ Cf. *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 1.

must believe that (God) is, and that he is a rewarder to them who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). This passage is treating directly of faith which is a theological virtue; of faith that was always a necessity for salvation; of faith as possessed by the most ancient of men, Abel, Henoch, Noe (cf. Heb. vv. 4-5, 7).

There is no denying that in St. Paul's pair of credibles, God's existence and God's remunerative providence, all articles of faith are contained. Whatever is conceivable through faith as existing eternally in the Godhead, as objects of our fruition in beatitude, must, from the very nature of the case, be traced back to existent divinity in which it is located as in its source. As for the implementing providence, the reward God holds in store, no natural norm can unlock the mystery. It is exclusively by divine ordinance that all things pertaining to human salvation work out. God being in full charge, we learn wholly through faith in him the unique mystery of man's redemption; and therein, the Incarnation and passion of God's Son, the sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, etc.

What is important to bear in mind is that the pair of prime credibles is not restricted to God as author of nature. They rise to the level of God honored as author of grace and salvation. Otherwise they would not comprehend supernatural mysteries reserved for future revelation. They would be of inferior grade; and the first recipients of faith in them would not be established in the supernatural order. This would prevent them from having specifically the same faith that we ourselves have! ⁴ The discernment of St. Thomas is clear and steady.

The unity of God, known by rational demonstration, is not called an article of faith. It is a postulate of all articles, a preamble to faith. . . . But the unity of the divine essence as identified by the simple faithful with God's almightiness and universal providence, natural and supernatural, connotes so many things that tower too high for reason to prove, that it must be conceded to be popularly an article of faith.

The two prime credibles must be ranked equally as articles of faith by all—the wise no less than the untutored, and, vice versa, the specialist and the plebeian. They are factors of pure faith and not preliminary admissions or preambles, such as the existence of God as author of nature is—a truth too perspicuous to be believed in on the part of those who know.

It follows that the faith of the patriarchs and our own is substantially

⁴ Cf. *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 1, aa. 4-5; *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 8.

the same—the faith of Abraham and of all who will repose eternally “in Abraham’s bosom,” Christians especially. That faith is supernatural. Its primary formal object is God’s own innermost life. The formal motive of its actuation is the authority of God revealing.

It is manifest to Old Testament readers that pre-Christian ancients did more than believe in God as the author of nature. The Prime Mover of the universe, the First Cause, who in himself is pure act (and recognized as such by the pagan Aristotle), are concepts far below all that was conveyed by “the living God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob,” identified eventually as the author of grace. The “living God” spoke and showed himself supernaturally to the patriarchs and prophets, and through their instrumentality now reveals himself to us. There is no mistaking the appositeness of his praises in the Psalms: “God of our salvation”; “living God”; “God our refuge and our strength”; “Thou art my Father, my God, and the support of my salvation” (Ps. 45:2; 88:27).

These refrains exalt God as the author of salvation. They do not stop at his being primal *ens*. They celebrate the innermost and most eminent dignity of his Godhead, the Deity, who through the medium of grace has made us sharers in his divinity (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4).

“Prophetic revelation,” St. Thomas therefore concludes, “insofar as the trend of its ordinances is toward faith in the deity, has had a three-fold increase, matching three successive historical epochs. The first period, antedating the Law of Moses was Abrahamic and antediluvian. It is commonly described as the epoch ‘before the Law.’ Then came the Mosaic Epoch ‘under the Law.’ It led to the Christian epoch, or the period of ‘grace’” [*Ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia*].

It is obvious why the following proposition of laxists has been condemned: “Broadly speaking, faith that is based on the testimony of creatures or reposes on any other similar motive, is sufficient for justification” (Denz. 1173).

Reinforcement. Articles of faith hold an important place in the exposition of doctrine, in the same way that the first principles of reason figure importantly in the processes of natural reason. But the said first principles are reducible to this one: “It is impossible to affirm and to deny at the same time.” And some of them are contained in others. “Efficient and final causality” [the whatness and why-ness of things, to choose an example] evolves from the principle: “Everything that is has some reason for its being,” either intrinsically or extrinsically. In a

parallel manner, the whole body of doctrine that is of faith derives its substance from the two Pauline credibles: "God is"; "God rewards those who seek him."

It should be observed that St. Thomas lays down expressly: "All principles are reduced back to this first one" formulated by Aristotle: "It is impossible to affirm and at the same time to deny" (*Met.*, IV). Therefore, principles that fit into the universal of noncontradiction, like those of causality and finality, are open to indirect demonstration through proofs showing that their contraries are absurd.

For St. Thomas a "contingent being without a cause" is not only unintelligible, it is absurd. Kant reasons otherwise by claiming that the denial of causality, in accounting for contingent beings, is indeed unintelligible but not absurd. Why is it not absurd? An unintelligible thing would, by its nature, be metaphysically repugnant to *ens* or being, which is the proper object of the intellect. Now granting, hypothetically, that there were some contingent thing that had no cause to produce it, this would follow. Being without a cause, it would have its existence from itself—*a se*—and yet, being contingent, it would not be of itself—*non a se*. A contradiction of the sort cannot escape being absurd.

To sum up, the substance of science is contained implicitly in the principle of noncontradiction when it is rightly understood. So also, in the two prime credibles—"God is"; "God rewards"—is secreted the substance of faith such as it was possessed by the primitive Christians. Let that suffice for our present aim. It shows that the substance of faith, from the beginning, has not been increased.

Second part of St. Thomas' distinction. A sort of embryonic unfolding through intelligible expansion and development has led to an increase in the articles of faith.

Proof. Certain things have become clearly known in the lapse of time which, in earlier epochs, were not known expressly. This part of the divine plan was exemplified in the Lord's communication to Moses. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." To this asseveration the Hebrew text adds: "My name, Yahweh, I did not make known to them" (Ex. 6:2). The sacred name, Yahweh, was not pronounced orally by the Hebrews. By silence they sought to venerate it, using the title Adonai, "Lord," in its stead. The introduction of the newly revealed name, Yahweh, inaugurated a new period in the history

of the chosen race. Thereafter, Yahweh showed that, being the Creator of everything, he continuously exercised his lordship by sovereign legislation, management, and control.

A new step forward was occasioned by the clear revelation of a Messias to come, for which the Psalmist expressed gratitude in the verse, "My understanding is above that of the ancients" (Ps. 118:100).⁵ With clearer vision, St. Paul witnesses to improved intellection after Christ's birth. The improvement dissolves, however, into the perception of the "Mystery of Christ" as a unit, to be completed by the conversion of the Gentiles.

The mystery was definitely one; but the Apostle's understanding of it matured gradually as had the more remote understanding of other generations dead and gone. He says: "My knowledge of the mystery of Christ you may read. It was not known in other generations among the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4-6).

In his article, "Whether the degrees of prophecy change in the lapse of years,"⁶ St. Thomas deals with pre-Christian antiquity, which was closed once and for all by the death of Christ and his apostles. For this reason, the second part of his distinction may be put this way: Before the death of Christ and his apostles, the unchanged original deposit of doctrine in faith became more and more manifest through successive revelations.

Perplexities listed at the head of this investigation invite disentanglement.

1. In the Old Testament explicit truths contained in God's promises grow clearer, the closer they are to the advent of our Lord. St. Paul appreciated this when, after singling out Abel, Henoah, and Noe, he wrote: "All these died according to faith, not having received the promises; but beholding them afar off and saluting them and confessing that they were pilgrims on earth" (Heb. 11:13).

2. There was no increase nor any advancement in God's knowledge as he taught the things of faith. None but creaturely men, the faithful, could make that kind of headway—and only by the learning they received from God as his disciples. This is why, for St. Paul, the Old

⁵ [This verse and Psalm originated nearer the time of Daniel than David. Its accommodation, however, carries.—Tr.]

⁶ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 174, a. 6.

Covenant was reputed as an educator of the elect race, because of its spiritual inferiority or childhood (cf. Gal. 3:23-26).

3. Since the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given unto profit in the common cause (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4, 7, 11), and since the patriarchs of the ancient Covenant were the institutors of faith, the fathers of the Old Law received that measure of knowledge pertaining to faith which was required in their time, to pass it on to the people either in abstract form or in symbols.

Solution of Doubts

First doubt. What about the degree of perfection characterizing the faith of the patriarchs themselves and the leaders among the prophets? They indeed enjoyed a more explicit belief in the mysteries of faith than their contemporaries; but it is impossible to reckon with certainty the exact boundaries of their gift. In the opinion of Sts. Augustine and Thomas, the experience of Moses when God passed by amounted to a transient insight into God's essence, which would involve a most exalted knowledge of the Blessed Trinity. It would make Moses superior to all other prophets and thereby justify the encomium which climaxes Deuteronomy and the Pentateuch: "There was no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Dt. 34:10).⁷

In this connection Aquinas declares that the vision of Moses was a more excellent revelation of divinity than anything within the range of David's personal mental horizon; but David evidences a fuller knowledge of the mysteries focusing in the Incarnation. Furthermore, St. Matthew's record of Christ's assertion that "among those born of women, not one had risen who was greater than John the Baptist" (Mt. 11:11), occasions this comparison of Aquinas: "John the Baptist belongs to the New Testament, all whose ministers rank even before Moses, witnessing as they do to the glory of the Lord on a higher scale. 'All of us, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. 3:18). The reason is this. Christ brought into the world a plenitude of revelation which is designated in Hebrews (1:1): 'God who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, spoke in times past to the Fathers by the prophets, in these days, has spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. . . .'"

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 174, a. 4, and especially ad 1, 3.

Adam's faith will be treated elsewhere: Question 5, Article 1 of this volume.

Second doubt. How is it that after the death of Christ and his apostles, there could come about an increase in the articles of faith by mere unfolding?

The time of Christ and his apostles was one of fullness, as expressed by St. Paul (cf. Gal. 4:4). In it was imparted the plenitude of common, public revelation which authorizes the following formula for our conclusion: "After the death of Christ and the apostles, the number of articles increased through explanations of the content of divine mysteries. There were no new substantial revelations. There were, however, new propositions issued by the teaching Church, bringing out ever more and more clearly what had been previously revealed in simpler forms and even in a confused manner."⁸

Proof I: Authority of the First Vatican Council. "The doctrine of faith which God has revealed, has not been proposed as though it were a philosophical finding to be perfected by human genius. It is a divine deposit entrusted to the Spouse of Christ for safekeeping and infallible teaching. Therefore, the meaning of sacred dogmas which Holy Mother Church has once declared, is to be retained in perpetuity; and is never to be parted from in favor of allegedly higher forms of intelligence and nomenclature. Let growth therefore increase . . . may its progress be great and forceful in understanding, in knowledge, and in wisdom; regarding single things and all things, on the part of each and every organic member throughout the Church of God, proportioned in degrees that match the rolling centuries and ages. Only let that growth be one in kind, one in dogmatic form and lineage, consistently one and the same, in meaning and expression" (Denz. 1800).

Anathema is hurled against anyone who claims it possible for science to become so "advanced" that the progress of its findings can impose a necessity of departing from one or another of the Church's dogmas and embracing some new truth incompatible with that which the Church had previously understood and still understands (cf. Denz. 1818).⁹

Proof II. Theological argument of the First Vatican Council. Analysis discerns three points in the paragraph just cited: 1) The common body of revelation has been complete since the deaths of Christ and the apos-

⁸ *De Revelatione* (1st edition), I, p. 185; (3rd edition), pp. 82-86.

⁹ Cf. Vacant, *Études sur le Concile du Vatican*, II, pp. 281 ff., against Guenther.

tles. It has been duly entrusted to the Church as a divine deposit. 2) A doctrine of faith is no plaything. It is not to be treated like a philosophical discovery awaiting more perfect development from the refinements of human genius. 3) Its binding force results from the Church's infallible declaration.

First point: A proposition to the contrary voicing a tenet of the Modernists was condemned by St. Pius X (cf. Denz. 2021). Revelation, which constitutes the body of Catholic faith, did not attain to its completion through the apostles. The opposite truth had been framed as follows by the Vatican Council (cf. Denz. 1787): The deposit of "supernatural revelation . . . is contained in written books and in unwritten traditions which were received from Christ's own mouth by the apostles, or were, so to speak, handed down by the apostles, under impulsion from the Holy Ghost so as to have reached us" (Denz. 783). It is commonly taught that private revelations lie outside the boundaries of this infallible doctrine of the Church.

Second point: Human genius has nothing to add to the doctrine handed over to the Church that can increase its perfection. Let men meddle with it and the effect will be one of adulteration. The admixture of fallible ingredients would be ruinous. Not even a theological conclusion, reinforced infallibly when the Church condemns a contradictory teaching, can add any intrinsic perfection to the deposit of faith. The contradictory proposition, at best, can only be condemned as erroneous, not as heretical. This does not suffice to put the truth impugned into the category of credibles. No human power, even of the Church, can canonize a truth to be believed in as one of pure faith, if it has not antecedently been revealed by God's exclusive authority. God's authority is the motive which constitutes a truth as belonging to the mysteries that are objects of supernatural belief *per se*. Every such truth has to be revealed by God. For this reason, the doctrine of faith is unchangeable and in no sense open to further perfecting in itself.

Third point: With regard to the Church's infallible declaration, there seems room for this private opinion. Revealed doctrine is proposed ever more and more explicitly by the Church's magistracy. Indeed, Christ's teaching does not bind to individual belief in its parts, except insofar as they are sufficiently taught us by the Church. This explains the Church's method of clarifying the minds of the faithful by renewed expositions of the truths transmitted through Holy Scripture and tradition. Most of the time this is done by the exercise of her ordinary magistracy, and in

due course by the issuance of solemn decisions. This brings it about that a single dogma may be the occasion of a variety of formulas which may be graded according to the degrees of clearness manifested in their content.

Nova nove. Newness can affect anything in some way. However, it is not things absolutely new which Holy Church dispenses. It is God's secrets, unchangeable and divine, that she unfolds in ever-newer ways. It is the same mystery which St. John set forth in the assertion: "The Word was made flesh," which Holy Church, in dealing with Arius and Apollinaris, saw fit to couch in this other pertinent form: "The Word, consubstantial with the Father, became man."

Confirmation. Just as in the natural order the first principles of reason are more fully propounded by philosophy than by unscientific reasoning—and as definitions of the real, according to genus and differentiation, surpass others that are only nominal and common—so also Thomistic accuracy, as illustrated let us say by the analysis of liberty, gains decided advantage over unseasoned popular slogans; and yet, each category thus diversified, touches one and the same thing or subject.

Aristotle long ago pointed out that greater labor is involved in the "hunt for a good definition" than is expended in the deduction of properties from a definition already developed.¹⁰ Perhaps that is why the Molinists still hold aloof from the Thomists, withholding their acceptance of the fully developed definition of human liberty.

It is with the assistance of the Holy Ghost that the entire Church advances in the understanding of the things of faith, thanks to the Church's way of promulgating propositions increasingly definite, without the need of any new revelation.¹¹

Third doubt. In unfolding the doctrine of faith, does the Church proceed always the same way? No. The subject matter differs too much. A threefold variety is imposed: one for the more important dogmas; another for secondary ones; the third for *obiter dicta*, for truths apparently casual, or for those of a practical turn.

First group: Dogmas of first importance, known to have been explicitly believed from the Church's origin, are transfused from their primitive popular forms into scientific phraseology. For example, the mystery

¹⁰ Post cf. *Anal.* II, in St. Thomas' commentaries, lectiones 14–20.

¹¹ Cf. De Groot, *Tractatus De Ecclesia* (1906), pp. 309, 373 ff., 780; Vacant, *Études sur le Concile du Vatican*, II, p. 281.

of the Trinity was first communicated as an inset in the formula of baptism. Historical events connected with Arianism and Macedonianism brought about the subsequent definition of consubstantiality affecting all three divine Persons.

Second group: Secondary mysteries had an implicit existence, sometimes concealed, in the sources of revelation. Implicitly, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was believed in, if only by the authenticated greeting: "Hail (Mary) full of grace." The Church's solicitude was exercised in clarifying the full import of these secretions. They were no idle treasure. Mary's "fullness of grace" vindicated the definition: "The Blessed Virgin's soul was never stained by sin." Individuals among the faithful who denied the Immaculate Conception were not aware that, even while denying it, they were believing in it implicitly. Their denial was not due to their faith, but to their errancy in reasoning.

Third group: Certain *obiter dicta*, as it were, things talked over casually and casually done in the beginning of the Church's life, gradually took shape, so as to be subsequently insisted upon, professed, and carried out as ingrained in the faith. Such was belief in the validity of baptism conferred by heretics. Many things touching the sacraments were revealed, not through formulas, but by the acts performed in their administration. These gestures were eventually passed upon as necessary for validity. Some of them had reference to the matter of the sacraments, or to its form, to the minister, and to the recipient. Numerous propositions might be composed to describe them. They would not be theological conclusions deduced from speculative truths. Rather, they would be an unfolding, through practice, of things implicitly believed in from the beginning.

Fourth doubt. What are the causes assigned for this progress in the understanding of dogmas?

The principal cause is the invisible assistance of God's Holy Spirit. Secondary causes are the studious investigation of theologians and the devotion of the people. Numerous historical occasions might be listed which fall, for the most part, under three heads: the condemnation of heresy and heretical beliefs; the progress of the natural sciences; and, in particular, philosophy.

Fifth doubt. Can Holy Church define a theological conclusion as a dogma? ¹² A reply puts one under the necessity of making several distinctions.

¹² *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 18, 20, 189 ff.

A
theological
conclusion
produced
discursively
may be

1. Explanatory in the sense of a single unfolding of a pure truth of faith. Explicative, so-called.

Any truth or truths that are equivalently revealed, such as these: "Christ is a true man"; "He has a rational soul."

Any particular conclusion revealed within a universal truth, of which it is a part or a partial factor; e.g. "Abraham contracted original sin."

These truths can be defined.

2. Deduced objectively in virtue of a connection between an essence and its properties: cause and effect. This is called illative.

A conclusion derived from two premises, both of which are specifically revealed.

A conclusion drawn from a premise of faith and a premise of purely natural knowledge is only virtually revealed. The connection makes and spoils its purely divine character.

Such a truth cannot be defined; but the denial of it can be infallibly condemned as erroneous.

Explicative and illative are technical terms designating two processes of discursive thinking. Applied to doctrinal matters, the explicative process brings in no new idea. It merely unfolds the subject or predicate of a proposition, otherwise revealed, and shows, not a new truth, but an old truth blossoming anew. It is a definition manifesting the content of a word defined.

The illative process may be either subjective or objective. Recourse is had to subjective illation for the purpose of showing that a given proposition is contained equivalently in the deposit of revelation. A good example is the apologetical appeal to Sacred Scripture in establishing the infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*. This Catholic doctrine is a conclusion guaranteed by our Lord's words to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18).

Objective illation accomplishes something different. There is a grafting in its blossoming. It establishes a distinct truth; not one that grows out of a revealed premise as its embryo, but another not revealed in itself. This other truth is so connected with a revealed truth that it

forms one thing with it, without for that reason being a special object of faith by itself.

Doctrinal Solution of the Problem

First Point: It is certain that the Church can define as dogma a truth that has been equivalently revealed, not in the illative but in the explicative sense. "Equivalently," for the said truth has been formally revealed anyway—but its known exposition is in different terms.

That "Christ was true man" is a truth of the kind. But there is no real humanity without a rational soul. Therefore, as the Church defined against Apollinaris, Christ was endowed with a rational soul. The conclusion is compulsory from the bare definition of man.

Second Point: It is certain that particular propositions bind in faith, whenever they are bunched into a universal proposition revealed in advance and already binding in faith. That Abraham contracted original sin is a proposition of this nature. It is contained in the universal: "All men sinned in Adam." No theologian dissents. This particular proposition was formally revealed implicitly.

Third Point: The Carmelite Thomists of Salamanca (Salmanticenses) propound what seems to be a certainty.¹³ It is a clear analysis of an illative theological conclusion. When the illation deduces from two premises, both of which are of faith, the conclusion as such, apart from the reasoning process engendering it, is equivalent to a revelation. Its specification is *de fide*. It must be believed. It is without alloy. No alien notion is mixed up with it. The relation between its subject and predicate has the force of a formal revelation.

Fourth Point: It is certain that the Church can condemn infallibly, and often does condemn as erroneous, the denial of a theological conclusion which is only virtually revealed, in being connected with some truth that is directly revealed. The infallibility of the Church extends to complete guardianship of the deposit of faith, authorizing it to adapt means proportionate to passing needs. Hence, when an error is perceived in conclusions whose parts share in the clear revelation of some truth with which they are connected, the error reacts on the premises: it dims and weakens them.¹⁴ The said conclusions pertain indirectly to

¹³ Salm., *De Fide*, disp. 1, dub. 4, n. 127.

¹⁴ Cf. De Groot, *Summa De Ecclesia* (1906), p. 312.

the faith, like a special category, in the perspective of St. Thomas. The reason is that, from their denial follows an indirect denial of a truth of faith.¹⁵

Fifth Point. The following question is open to controversy. Besides condemning a mixed truth of the kind as erroneous, is the Church equipped to define infallibly as a dogma, a theological conclusion which is only virtually revealed, like a property in its essence or an effect in its cause, or an objective illation?

Opinions. Vásquez, Suárez, and De Lugo stand for an affirmative answer. Several Thomists and many theologians of all schools take to the negative position. Of recent date, Marin-Sola presents a distinction.¹⁶ If the moot proposition concerns God, his reply is affirmative; if it concerns creatures, his reply is negative. Once God is involved there is the same identical divine reality and the connection is metaphysical. But in creatures there is a real clear-cut distinction between properties and their essence that sets the distinction in the physical order, not in the metaphysical.

In keeping with the view more commonly accepted by Thomists, this author joins with Father Schultes, O.P.,¹⁷ and Hugon, O.P., in a cause defended by the Salmanticenses with other Thomists of note.¹⁸ John of St. Thomas expresses his adherence at the beginning of his commentary on the *Summa* of Aquinas, when treating of theology as distinct from faith, because of its special formal motive, which is virtual, yet not formal revelation. Following are our arguments.

A fundamental characteristic in the discursive procedure called "objectively illative" is this: the premise that is known naturally, carries into it a really new element, over and above everything contained in the subject and predicate of the accompanying proposition that is simply revealed. As a consequence, the connection between subject and predicate in the conclusion is not the result of formal enlightenment begotten of formal revelation. It has been developed uniquely from virtual revelation which is the formal object of theology and not the formal object of faith.

Hypothesis One: This turns out to be true especially when the major is natural and the minor is of faith. In this case, the principle conveyed

¹⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 32, a. 4; IIa IIae, q. 11, a. 2.

¹⁶ Cf. *L'Évolution homogène du dogme Catholique* (1924), chaps. 1-2.

¹⁷ Cf. Schultes, *Introductio ad historiam dogmatum* (1924), pp. 131-44.

¹⁸ Cited by Salmant; Capreolus, Cajetan, Bañez, John of St. Thomas, in *De Fide*, disp. 1, dub. 4, n. 124.

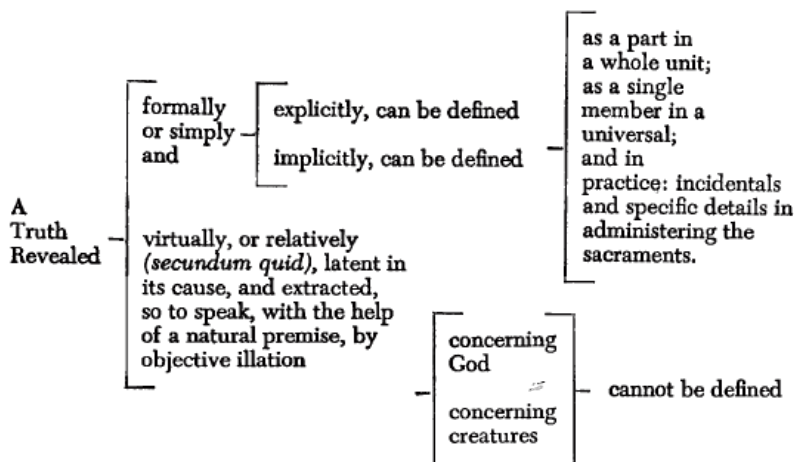
in the major is only that of a natural connection between an inherent property and its essence, between a cause and its proper effect. Take, for instance, this syllogism: Every being endowed with intelligence is free. But God is an intelligent being. Therefore, God is free. Let the reasoner be assumed to have grasped the major through his own natural insight. The conclusion about God would then pass as a virtual revelation, solely by its connection with the minor. The divine thing remains the same, but a new truth is framed about it. The formal location of the truth, as truth, has to be in a particular intellect. This is our strongest argument against opponents, including Marin-Sola.

It must be clear that a proposition virtually revealed in becoming known by an objectively illative argument cannot be rated as if it were simply revealed. Its revelation is only *secundum quid* or, as it were, collateral. It has been discovered as an effect newly issuing from its cause, a property newly manifested in its essence. In this way creatures were existent before creation—in God their first cause. It was not indeed an objective existence; it was purely potential, yet real.

St. Thomas was able to deduce numerous conclusions from the principles of Aristotle; not because their virtual existence was manifest, in itself, beforehand, but because Aristotle, their author or cause, without foreseeing or knowing that he was doing it, really transmitted the wisdom to Aquinas by teaching only the principles that secreted it.

Therefore, propositions of this sort cannot be defined by the Church as dogma, unless they have been otherwise equivalently revealed in Holy Scripture or tradition. Nevertheless, it is within the Church's rights to condemn infallibly, as erroneous, any other propositions that deny or contradict them. The condemnation of the following doctrine is to the point. During his mortal life, apart from his acquired knowledge and the beatific vision, Christ was bereft of intermediate infused knowledge such as is peculiar to the angels. The opposite teaching cannot be defined; yet there is no denying it to be a necessary deduction, an illation. It has not been revealed explicitly, but it has been revealed equivalently. [From birth Christ possessed acquired human knowledge, infused angelic knowledge, and intuitive beatific knowledge.—Tr.]

In this matter it is well to retain that no unit can exist in its wholeness, if any of its actual parts are missing. Neither soul nor body alone can make a whole man. Contrariwise, a cause can actually exist without producing its natural effect. The essence of a man can be conceived ex-



pressly without any percept of this or that characteristic which must be gotten at illatively.

Father Marin-Sola holds that a thing virtually revealed about God amounts to a simple implicit revelation, since the indivisible and unchangeable divine reality is always the same. How can that be? The Godhead is the same; but the created truths representing him are all different from one another and are different from him. Truths are individuated as distinct manifestations made to and through the human intellect. Until a truth is formally lodged in the intellect, there is no manifestation, no revelation. And when they are lodged there, what happens?

Must one contend that the manifold conclusions filling the treatise on God, one and three, are indeed separate metaphysical deductions, but coalescing, as they do, into one single truth, they may all be defined as dogmas? Certain truths among them are absolute revelations; but others are only absolute deductions. They are all about the same thing, God—in the singular! But each proposition deduced has its own object and concepts apart.

There is no gainsaying that one and the same divine thing engenders a diversity of formal objects by its multifarious actuations and endless forms of knowledge. Besides natural theology, there is supernatural or sacred theology, and above these sciences ranks infused faith, and much higher still, the beatific vision.

All these habits concern one only deity, as transcendental; but the

multiplicity of their respective objects prevents their equalization or identification with that transcendental thing.

We have to discriminate with Cajetan. In the perception of truth the formal object *quod* grows out of the formal object *quo*. In the light, out of the light, and from the light, colors grow actually visible and in great variety. In the same way, from the focal metaphysical principle, the formal motive, we discern the distinct grades of perception in the knowledge of God: theodicy, sacred theology, faith, and beatific vision.¹⁹

It must not be thought that divine certitude is diffused through the potency of a metaphysical conclusion, when it would not be possible through merely physical deductions made from definite revelations. Even metaphysical certitude ranks below the supernatural certitude of infused faith. Not even a formula produced independently by the Church can come up to that level—the formal motive of infused faith hypothetically defaulting. The doctrine of faith is not susceptible of increase after the manner of philosophical findings. Sts. Augustine and Thomas brought theology to perfection, but not the faith itself. In the premises which we here combat, revelation itself would be historically prolonged. The fact is, it was closed through the deaths of Christ and the apostles.

Should the Church act conformably to Fr. Marin-Sola's theory, it would say what is utterly untrue. It would propose as simple revelation, to be believed by all on the authority of God revealing, what has not been simply revealed, but has been deduced from something else that had been simply revealed, like a property derived from an essence, or an effect traced back to its cause.

Hypothesis Two: If now, instead of using a natural truth for the major and a truth of faith for the minor, we reverse the case and place the proposition of faith in the major and the natural truth in the minor, a concession is in order. The reasoning then would often consist in an explicative analysis of the major, while the minor would explain the major's predicate or ascribe it to some individual. An historical illustration will unravel the perplexities.

Christ constituted St. Peter the indefectible foundation of the teach-

¹⁹ We are here incorporating a luminous footnote into the text. It contains references to *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* (July, 1925) Schultes, "Eclaircissements sur l'évolution du dogme," p. 299; cf. also *De Deo Uno*, pp. 43-44, 45-49, English translation, *The One God* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company).—Tr.

ing Church. But an indefectible foundation of a Church that teaches needs to be infallible. Therefore, Christ bestowed infallibility on St. Peter to guarantee the safe transmission of the doctrine of salvation down the ages.

More briefly put, whatever is only connected with revelation is something distinct from revelation, and cannot be honestly taught as strictly and properly belonging to revelation as a part. [It is an admixture, an adjunct.]

If this were not true, an absurd conclusion would follow. Holy Church might engage not only in the infallible occupation of guarding and explaining the deposit of faith, she might also develop the perfection of received doctrines and found new ones. Then, through her defining power, she could impose as obligatory beliefs, what had never been previously an object of divine faith. [The result would be catastrophic.]

Sacred theology is a habit acquired by human effort, whose rank is far beneath infused theological faith. If its first discovery of a virtually revealed truth could be defined on a par with forthright revelations, so could the second, so could the hundredth, in a series of lineal deductions. The outcome would be the ultimate canonizing of the whole *summa* of theology, provided only that the collateral materials of successive demonstrations operated through syllogisms that were necessary and metaphysically certain.

Corollary. Therefore, one must keep alert in discerning the difference between a proposition that has been formally revealed implicitly, and a proposition virtually revealed, but recognizable only by discursive treatment of the objectively illative brand. The labor of many centuries is required to make definite progress from the confused concepts of efficacious grace and liberty, toward the lucid, precise, and full unfolding of just what they contain.

As for the intrinsic efficacy of grace, it seems to be revealed clearly enough through the inspired passages of Holy Scripture: "It is God who works in you both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. 2:13); "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7); "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever he will, he shall turn it" (Prov. 21:1).

Nevertheless, owing to subjective dispositions, it requires many dissertations at times to prove that a particular truth has been equivalently revealed or that a particular definition, like that of liberty, is good and

acceptable. The hunt is on, however, from the wordifying definitions of lexicography, into the domain of objective reality and truth.²⁰

Sixth doubt. If, as established above, the primal pair of credibles contain implicitly all truths to be subsequently revealed, is the word "implicitly" to be understood in the same sense which it has in this other principle: "The doctrine of Christ and of the apostles contains implicitly all dogmas to be duly defined thereafter by the Church"?

Our answer is "No." There is a distinction in sense between explanation and development or unfolding that is comparatively more or less embryonic (*explicatio* vs. *explicatio*). This double feature occurs even in natural knowledge.

1. The idea of *ens* or being comprehends all other philosophical conceptions implicitly. Indeed all other ideas are modalities of being, within it, not outside it. Otherwise they would be nothing. In the idea of genus—animality, for instance—a contrary feature is manifest. Genus does not contain specific differences in any but a virtual way. The differences are extrinsic to the genus, as is rationality compared with animality in human beings. Substantiality, on the other hand, is not extrinsic to *ens*.

2. One and the same concept—for example, of liberty—is embraced at first confusedly and afterwards distinctly. This is a preferable analogy in illustrating dogmatic progressiveness. It belongs to the order of knowledge itself, which is so different from physical germination.

These two points are applicable to the order of faith. First, the Godhead and divine providence are identified with the pair of prime credibles. They contain implicitly and actually the supernatural mysteries that were revealed after them: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. These mysteries are not outside the deity, not beyond supernatural providence, any more than modalities can be outside the bounds of *ens*. But in order for them to have become known previously to the death of Christ and his apostles, advancement from implicit to explicit comprehension had to be effected through new revelations.

Secondly, one and the same idea, known confusedly at first, later on becomes distinct. In the Christian era the Incarnation of the Word shows what we mean. Only gradually was the idea of consubstantiality thought out and grasped. Similarly, the fullness of grace enjoyed by our Blessed Mother was perceived to contain all that the formula of the

²⁰ Cf. below, q. 2, a. 6.

Immaculate Conception expresses, only by progressive stages. The complex fact of Christ's institution of the sacraments has occasioned the production of numerous formulas safeguarding their proper administration.

Hence, the solution of the sixth doubt carries. The two prime credibles, God's existence and his remunerative providence, contain all that has since been unfolded in the field of faith, but in two different ways. Before the coming of Christ and his apostles, developments were in the form of new revelations. After the death of the Christian founders, they had to shed the form of revelations for that of new declarations on the part of the Church, whenever circumstances logically required.

Seventh and last doubt. On the feast of the first Christian Pentecost, or at least before they died, were the apostles in possession of explicit faith in all twelve articles of the Creed and the full body of propositions afterwards defined by the Church? ²¹

First reply: It is certain that the apostles were familiar with whatever truths were explicitly contained in the deposit of faith as it was found in Holy Scripture and tradition. This is clear from the many texts of Scripture in which it is conveyed that the apostles transmitted revelation in its integrity. It was completed in St. John.²²

The Councils of Trent and of the First Vatican concur in stating that revelation is contained in Sacred Scripture and in traditions received from the apostles. It was on the day of Pentecost that the prophecy related by St. John was carried out: "I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will teach you all truth" (Jn. 16:12-13). On Pentecost the apostles received, besides the gift of tongues, the peculiar graces called *gratis datae*, which fitted them for teaching. We single them out from St. Paul's list, "the word of wisdom . . . the word of knowledge . . . and faith" (1 Cor. 12:8-9).²³

Second reply. Among opinions, it is more probable that the apostles did not become fully aware on Pentecost of each and every truth explicitly contained in the deposit of revelation. Several truths were re-

²¹ Cf. Vacant, *Études sur le Concile du Vatican* (1895), I, p. 378.

²² The passages referred to are the following: 1 Cor. 12:28; The Commentaries of St. Thomas are rich in this respect, cf. the golden table of his works, s.v. Apostoli, n. 3: Heb. 7:11 ff., 12:27 ff.; Rom. 8:2, 3; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:8, 10 (Comm. St. Thomas); 2 Cor. 3:11; Jn. 14:26; 15:15, 16:13; 2 Tm. 1:13-14, 3:10, 14; Rom. 15:12; Eph. 2:20; Col. 2:7.

²³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 4.

served for their training in the future. It was after the Pentecostal excitement had calmed, that St. Peter was privately instructed by a vision, relative to the vocation of the Gentiles to be baptized (cf. Acts 10:10-34). Then, too, it is more probable that St. John learned at a much later date the mysteries he wrote about in the Apocalypse.

Third reply. It would be temerarious to imagine that the infused knowledge of the apostles was of a grade inferior to that of the acquired knowledge possessed by the Fathers of the Church and theologians.²⁴ The apostles' grasp of the truth was due to a most eminent light, that clarified in their minds the deeper simple principles of Christian doctrine. Their epistles show it. And through a most vivid and exalted gift of contemplation, they fed intimately on the simplicity of those principles. They knew Jesus by sight, in their daily associations, far better than contemporary critics can now know him. It was in much the same manner that Napoleon's domestics had a keener acquaintanceship with the warrior than erudite experts can now acquire by examining the documents of his epoch.

The advantage is explained by studying the lives of great mystics. The peerless contemplative, St. John of the Cross, is an outstanding illustration of how these rare souls get endowed with higher forms of knowledge which, in spite of its confusing excellence, is more perfect than what is possessed by many workaday theologians. And yet the theologians' memories may be charged with long chains and a full array of propositions condemned by the Church about this mystery.

It is very easy to run over, in Denzinger, the full assortment of propositions that have been defined and errors that have been condemned, in connection with the Incarnation and Redemption. To learn them would equip a scholar perfectly with a knowledge of the letter of Catholic doctrine. Yet, one can never imbibe the spirit of Catholic doctrine by the material reading even of Denzinger. An operative faith would be required and the accompaniment of gifts dependent for their infusion on the Holy Ghost. Such were the endowments of St. John of the Cross and St. Catherine of Siena. For a stronger reason they had to be the priceless treasure of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John. It is from the doctrine of the apostles that the whole of theology proceeds. [No wonder that St. Peter has been called "the summit of theologians"—*summitas theologorum*.] From the apostles as from a fountainhead in high mountains, the teachings of the Church flow down like rivers.

It is significant that, in the biography of St. Thomas, it is related that

²⁴ Cf. St. Thomas on the epistle to the Ephesians, 1:8.

St. Paul appeared to him several times by night, to explain to him most difficult texts in his inspired letters. Simple contemplation is often richer in its fruits than intricate considerations on the same subject matter. Infused contemplation soars all the higher, in proportion with its simplicity and likeness to contemplation in heaven.

Fourth reply. Suárez, De Lugo, and Franzelin agree in holding that God did not manifest to the apostles the particular contingent applications of the principles of faith, which he destined his Church to declare later on, in the course of the centuries.²⁵ Others are firm in believing the contrary. By a superior influx of infused knowledge that dispensed with discursive reasoning, the apostles knew these applications also.²⁶

St. Thomas says that the apostles surpassed in knowledge Moses, St. John the Baptist, and all Christians after Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.²⁷ They were the Church's foundation. They hold the primacy in faith, hope, charity, the charisms and graces *gratis datae*, the gift of tongues, the word of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, etc.²⁸

Supplemental data. Cajetan and John of St. Thomas could not doubt that the apostles excelled in the highest degree, thanks to the possession of an exquisite form of infused knowledge. John of St. Thomas thus describes it: "In my judgment the equipment of infused knowledge qualified the apostles to know the truths which theologians now have to work out laboriously, as weighing on the declaration of the mysteries of faith. I speak of truths—not opinions—for there may be an element of falsity in an opinion. There never can be, in a truth."²⁹

The ancients distinguished three motions in contemplation: straight, oblique, and circular. 1) The straight motion is direct, like climbing up a ladder or a mountain. 2) The oblique motion may sometimes be spiral. It facilitates the ascent of the mountain in circuitous or zigzag fashion, if not in a strictly spiral way. 3) The circular motion begins on the top of a mountain peak and is comparable to an eagle's flight into higher altitudes.³⁰

There are two apostles who excel in circular contemplation: St. John and St. Paul. Their relation with acquired theology is that of the circu-

²⁵ Cf. Suárez, *De Fide*, disp. 2, sec. 6, n. 18; De Lugo, *De Fide*, disp. 3, sec. 5, nn. 71-72;—Franzelin, *De Divina Traditione* (2nd edition), thesis 23, scholion, p. 293.

²⁶ Cf. Cajetan and John of St. Thomas; P. Lemonnyer: "Les Apôtres comme Docteurs de la Foi d'après S. Thomas," *Mélanges Thomistes* (1923).

²⁷ Cf. *Expositio super Matthaeum*, III.

²⁸ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Ep. I Cor.* 12:28, lect. 3; *Rom.* VIII, lect. 5.

²⁹ For Cajetan, cf. Article 7; John of St. Thomas, *De Fide*, disp. 6, a. 2, n. 20.

³⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6.

lar with the oblique; better still, that of a permanent circumference with all the potential polygons that it may circumscribe. The number of sides in a polygon may be increased indefinitely without ever attaining the smoothness and perfection of the circle banding them together. The simplicity of the circle is what the polygons can never grow into.

Circular contemplation is far superior to acquired theology. For this reason, exalted contemplation, infused and somewhat confusedly enjoyed, is not to be mixed up, theoretically, in the meshes of any commonplace doctrine admitted by all scholastics. The latter, in given cases, would cling to nothing more than what Occam and other nominalists would stand for. This would be anything but circular contemplation. It would have a gravity vanishing downwards (not upwards) into worthless intellectual vacuity. For Aquinas the knowledge of the apostles is just the contrary. He cites it as a miracle of the intellectual order.³¹

On the Faith of St. Joseph and His Hidden Life

The *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* contains an excellent article on St. Joseph's faith and his eminence in sanctity. On the authority of various documents cited therein, particularly the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Quam pluries*, of August 5, 1889, it is declared beyond doubt that St. Joseph, in his capacity of spouse of the Blessed Virgin, came closer than all other saints, through participation, to that supereminent sanctity by which the Blessed Mother towers above all.

The statement is particularly true in the matter of sanctifying grace and St. Joseph's charity. But as St. Thomas shows,³² all virtues, especially those infused, in being properties of sanctifying grace, are mutually equalizing and proportionate in any one just man. Aquinas words the teaching thus: "Just as fingers match and grow proportionately with the hand, so also do the virtues grow in man." They are parts and functionaries, so to speak, of the same spiritual organism to which the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost connected with charity belong.

It is not difficult, therefore, to acquiesce to the eloquent reasoning of Bossuet: While Joseph walked the earth, he exercised a living faith in

³¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentes*, I, chap. 6, par. 1. [Because of their luminousness and accessory importance, these last paragraphs, beginning with "Cajetan and John of St. Thomas," have been transferred from a footnote to the running text, which they were intended to supplement.—Tr.]

³² *Summa*, Ia IIae, q. 66.

keeping with his charity. He was moved by the Spirit of understanding and wisdom commensurately. He was lifted to the highest and simplest form of contemplation, particularly with regard to the Incarnation. "The apostles received Jesus to manifest him to the world. St. Joseph received him to conceal and to secrete him in silence."³³

The relationship with Jesus in his hidden life gave Joseph a higher rank than the apostles. Nevertheless, St. Joseph did not fall heir to the special graces accorded to St. John the Evangelist for the writing of the Apocalypse. It is probable that he was never favored with the beatific vision while he lived, even like the sudden, rapturous experience which was so extraordinary in the formation of St. Paul to be a doctor of grace. The Angelic Doctor has little to say on this subject and the reason is that the cult of St. Joseph was not so widespread in the Middle Ages as it has since become.

The secret mission of St. Joseph was superior to the (public) mission of the apostles. As Suárez shows, it required a greater grace: it not only pertained to the order of grace, it was related to the hypostatic union.³⁴ This peculiar excellence led Suárez to maintain as theologically probable that, after the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph stands first among all the saints in grace and glory. Gerson and St. Bernardine of Siena sound the same note. From the fourteenth century onward, it is a common view adhered to by Sts. Teresa, Francis De Sales, and Alphonsus Ligouri. It was sanctioned by Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical *Quam pluribus*. As a doctrine of piety it is prevailing at present all through the Church.³⁵

Article 8

Is It Suitable to Enumerate Articles of Faith?

Statement of the question. How many articles are there in the Creed? Some distinguish fourteen; others see twelve. Is the Creed complete? Why does it not contain one or more articles on the Eucharist?

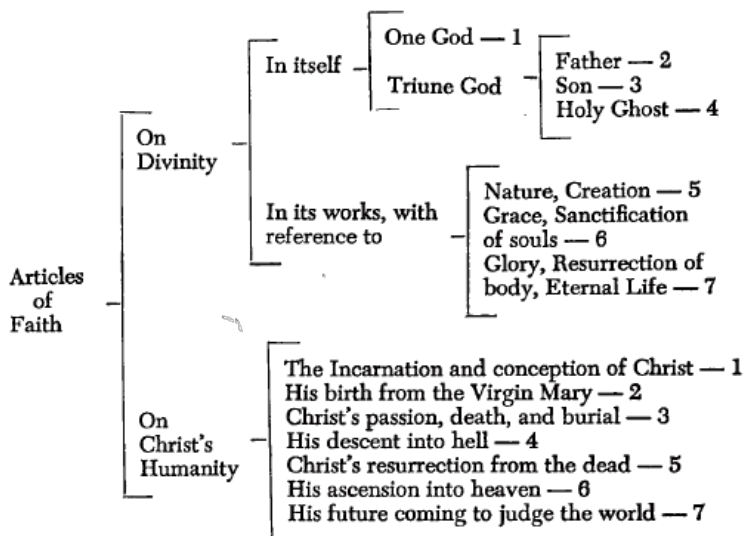
³³ Bossuet, *Panegyric of St. Joseph*. Compare St. Francis De Sales, Gerson, Isidore, and Isolani, O.P., *Summa de Donis S. Joseph* (Romae, 1887); cf. also, Ch. Sauvé, *Joseph Intime*; Lepicier, *Tractatus de Sancto Joseph*.

³⁴ Cf. Suárez in Illam, q. 29, a. 8, sect. 1.

³⁵ Cf. *Dictionnaire Théologique*, "s.v. Joseph," col. 1516. [The author here proposes to issue a thesis covering four points; namely, St. Joseph's unique and most special mission; his supereminent holiness; his Patronage of the Universal Church; devotion to him as of a kind surpassing the cult of all other saints.—Tr.]

St. Thomas favors fourteen as a correct enumeration: seven articles treating of the Godhead and seven dealing with Christ's humanity.

TABULATION OF THE CREED



They who count out twelve articles in the Creed, refer six of them to the divinity and six to Christ's humanity. They embrace all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity in one article, and separate resurrection and eternal life into two articles. Similarly, they join Christ's conception and birth with the Incarnation, treating all three mysteries as one; and yet St. Thomas points out that in each one of the three, just as touching each one of the Persons in the Trinity, there is a special difficulty that entitles all six units to be separated into six respective articles.

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent* adopts the division preferred by St. Thomas in designating each Person of the Blessed Trinity as the subject of a distinct article.

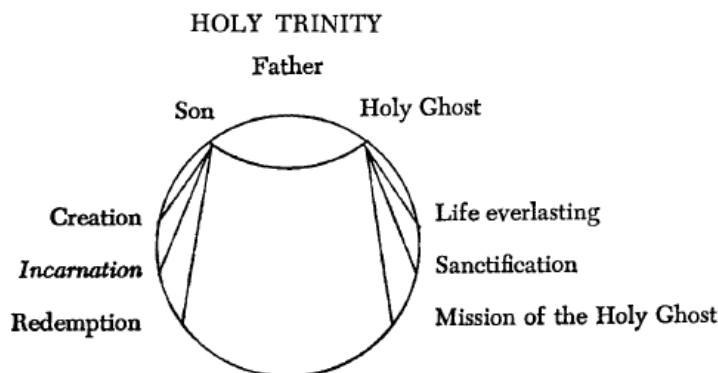
Nevertheless, the *Catechism* enumerates only twelve articles, because it binds the unity of God together with God the Father as Creator. It also unites into one, the conception and birth of Christ. In both cases it is guided by the literary order and structure of the Creed.

In the Tridentine *Catechism*, the Apostles' Creed contains three general divisions. The first general division has only one article, which combines the First Person of the deity and the wonderful work of creation.

The second general division is composed of six articles covering the Second Person of the Trinity and the mystery of redemption. The third general division, comprising five articles which are set forth in admirably apt and varied phrasing, deals with the Third Person of the Trinity venerated as chief head and font of holiness among men.¹

All articles of faith go back in a general way to three mysteries: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. In this perspective, four articles are reducible to the Trinity, namely, the oneness of God's nature and the singularness of each divine Person. Two articles are related to the Incarnation: Christ's conception and Christ's birth from the Blessed Virgin. Six articles must be reduced to the Redemption. They have to do with the wonders associated with Christ's Passion: his descent into hell, his resurrection, ascension, and second coming; the sanctification of souls; the resurrection of bodies; and life in eternity.

The sovereign mystery among all is the Holy Trinity. All others proceed from it and turn back up to it, as to the topmost arc in a circle.



All things proceed from God and return to him. First of all is the manifestation of God the Father in creation, the work of his omnipo-

¹ The three divisions of the Creed are these: 1) I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. 2) And in Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, who, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost (was born) of the Virgin Mary. He suffered, was crucified, and buried. He descended into hell, arose (from the dead) within three days, ascended into heaven and thence he is to come again to judge both the living and the dead. 3) I believe in the Holy Ghost, Lord and life-giver, in Holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and life everlasting.

tence. Next follows the original supernatural elevation which the Father effected in making us his adopted Sons.

Second in order is the manifestation of God the Son by way of the Incarnation and Redemption, in the Church and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

Finally, God the Holy Ghost is manifested in the progressive sanctification of souls leading up to a life of union with God, from which faith springs eternal life in glory.

Highest among all mysteries is that of the Trinity, the one which is hardest for us to grasp, it is so obscure! Some day, however, in the light of glory, it will become immediately evident and all supernatural mysteries that essentially depend on it will at once share its evidence. At present, our standing is that of disciples or pupils, plighting our faith on the Word of God revealing. Our initiation is progressive. It makes headway in the direction of divine knowledge, for even in the obscurity of faith we contemplate the relationship of all mysteries with the chief one.

Learned minds have sought to unify the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption. It is better to say: there are too many complications in the redemptive mystery that have no place in the Incarnation. Special obscurities affect both Christ's part and our own. There are Christ's personal merits that go so far as to reconcile extremes of joy and sorrow, which says nothing of Christ's perfect liberty and his impeccability. On the other hand, our own reconciliation through divine grace presents an enigma when analyzed conjointly with human liberty.

Our position is reinforced through the solution of objections.

1. The article of faith bearing on God's unity has to do with things too high for reason to master. They involve God's supernatural providence and almighty power centering around the authorship of grace. The unity of God as author of nature is not an article of faith. Reason demonstrates it, thus determining its rank as a preamble, antecedent to faith.

2. God's omnipotence postulates, in one way or another, complete knowledge of all things and the entire penetration of divine providence; yet, it is not counted as a distinct article in the Creed. In minor or inferior operations, God could not do freely whatever he wishes without knowing all about them and being in full charge.

3. It is proper to assign three distinct articles to the Persons of the Trinity, owing to some peculiar difficulty affecting each Person. Histori-

cal heresies emphasize this need; such as the stand of Arius against God the Son and that of Macedonius against the Holy Spirit. Still other difficulties have a bearing on Christ's conception and nativity.

4. There is nothing gained in multiplying articles about God the Father, since he alone is not dispatched into creation, as are God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

5. The infusion of wisdom is attributed to God the Son; the infusion of charity to God the Holy Ghost.

6. The Eucharist produces effects that justify its inclusion in articles concerning the sanctification of souls and the fruits of grace. As for its containing the body of Christ in a miraculous manner, it falls under God's omnipotence.

Article 9

The Formulation of Symbols

Are the Articles of Faith appropriately summed up in any form of the Creed. If not, can they be reduced to a fixed form or symbol yet to be composed?

Symbol is a Greek name derived from *symbollein* (συμβάλλειν), which is a verb signifying two things: a collection of several objects thrown together; a sign, badge, or other mark such as was employed to distinguish soldiers, or seals, real or equivalent, used among the ancients to certify compacts. Both these special elements enter into what is traditionally called a symbol of faith [a creed]. There is a definite propriety, therefore, in formulating diverse articles of faith and incorporating them into particular symbols or creeds, as did the apostles and, after them, the Fathers of the Church, beginning with the Council of Nice.

The suitableness of this unifying procedure is obvious. In the first place it is a simple method of teaching the faith to everybody so that it can be easily remembered. It serves, furthermore, to identify the faithful by their profession of what an authentic formula contains.

St. Thomas treats not only the Apostles' Creed and the more ample symbol, called the Nicene Creed (whose formal purpose was to declare more fully against the denial by Arius what the apostles had handed down relative to the divinity of God, the Word) he goes on to consider the Symbol of Constantinople, which augments the Symbol of Nice, by correcting subsequent errors about the Third Person of the Blessed

Trinity. Eunomius had risen up to deny the procession of God the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Macedonius had taken sides against the Holy Spirit's divine nature. The aforesaid symbols have a common lineage. A rather independent symbol, the Athanasian Creed, was welcomed by the Church later on.¹

Several symbols are accessible besides those recounted. They originated thanks to the Church's solicitude in arming the faithful against the subtleties of heretics by providing more explicit forms of profession concerning truths wrongfully repudiated or attacked. In all symbols the same body of truth, identical with the same faith, is expounded.²

In one article the wording, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," would be improved, if rendered: "I believe the Holy Catholic Church." This suggestion is based on the Church's intermediacy between the gift of faith in believers and the transmission of doctrine concerning it from the body of revelation deposited in the Church as a whole by its Founder. The Church's function is to teach, but the method of exercising that function through the promulgation of symbols and propositions ranks only as a condition for fostering and spreading the knowledge of faith, without sufficing to be of itself the formal motive for believing. ["I believe all that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches, not blindly in the abstract, but because thou, O God, hast revealed it—thou who canst neither deceive nor be deceived."—Tr.]³

Article 10

Is the Competency of the Pope, as Supreme Pontiff, Involved in the Composition and Promulgation of an Authentic Symbol or Creed?

Decidedly yes—just as in the convocation of a general council. The last word in determining what pertains to faith [and what does not] belongs to the Sovereign Pontiff. In this way faith is kept intact for all the faithful. As stated in the Decretals, to the Pope belongs the supervision and all decisive action governing the more momentous issues and perplexing difficulties in Church life.

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 9 ad 6.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 9 ad 2.

³ Cf. Michel's article in the *Dict. de Theol. cath.*, "Symboles, Origines historiques, valeur dogmatique."

The Angelic Doctor gives expression to this reasoning in connection with the Lord's own commission to Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Lk. 22:32).¹ What happened during the Passion of Christ was not the loss of interior faith on Peter's part, but a failure to confess it. Aquinas observes that unity of faith, untorn by schism, should prevail throughout the whole Church. This could not be if a question of faith were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of him who is over all.

The infallibility of the Roman Pontiff was defined in the First Council of the Vatican (sess. IV, chap. 4). The Pope is infallible when, in his capacity as the Church's Supreme Doctor, he speaks *ex cathedra*. Whatever doctrine he then defines can never be retracted nor substantially altered. It holds independently of the corporate consent of the teaching Church and over the heads of any ecumenical council (cf. Denz. 1839). Christ's promise has been verified. Never has the Bishop of Rome erred in matters of faith or morals (cf. Denz. 1836). Let rationalists and semi-rationalists contend as they will, no definitions of the papacy are detrimental to science (cf. Denz. 1679, 1712). The Holy Father is the duly accredited Defender of the Faith, whose duty it is to define and to defend the truths of faith (cf. Denz. 466).

Résumé of Question One

At this point our treatment of Question One, on the subject of faith and its two conditions, comes to a close.

The formal object *quod* is Prime Truth in essence.

The formal object *quo* is Prime Truth in its utterance.

Infalibly and supernaturally, in the act and habit of believing, the faithful adhere to God himself as revealer and revealed.

The two prerequisite conditions for this correspondence are divided between the object and the subject. As for the object of belief, it is proposed by the Church—it is officially taught—the Church herself being the proximate rule of faith. As for the subject believing, he is interiorly convinced of the evident credibility of the mysteries of faith. [His disposition reposes commonly on what are classified as the "evidences of Christianity" in apologetics.]

¹ This prayer of Christ was efficacious. It issued from the enlivening of his created will through the infallible influx of his divine will; cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 21, a. 4.

Faith's mysteries remain hidden from view. They are not seen. They cannot be demonstrated. But they are unhesitatingly embraced by the faithful who perceive the why and the wherefore for believing them.

QUESTION TWO

The Interior Act of Faith

Introduction

Passing on from the object of faith we now face the things that receive their specification from it. Such are the act of faith and the infused habit of faith which constitutes faith as a virtue. The virtue or habit of faith is the principle of the act through which faith makes itself known.

An act of faith may be made interiorly or exteriorly, secretly or openly. To confess the faith requires an exterior act. Our treatment of the interior act of faith will be divided into three parts and ten articles.

First part: What does it mean to believe? What signifies the variety in expressions: to believe in a god, to believe God, to believe in God? The basic teaching is in the *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 2, aa. 1-2.

Second part: The necessity of eliciting interior acts of faith (cf. *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 2, aa. 3-8). Salvation is impossible without them. But how far does the necessity extend? Does it embrace (1) supernatural truths? (2) natural truths bearing on the virtue of religion? (3) Does it require that certain truths be believed in with explicit knowledge? (4) Are all men bound equally to possess such explicit knowledge? (5) To merit salvation must one believe explicitly in Christ? (6) In the Trinity?

Third part: Meritoriousness of the act of faith. Is the act meritorious to start out with? Is human reason an interference with its merit? (cf. *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 2, aa. 9-10.)

Article 1

Is Believing the Same Thing as Thinking with Assent?

Statement of the question. The present article has been drawn out to show definitely the meaning of St. Augustine's doctrine as expressed in

his treatise on the predestination of saints (I, chap. 2). "To believe," he says, "is to think with assent." This fuller rendering is backed up by his context. To believe is to bestow serious thought on truths revealed by God, assenting to them with unshakable firmness, notwithstanding their lack of evidence.

Such language breeds difficulties. If believing is thinking, then it is the occupation of an inquiring mind. Now, St. John Damascene abhors an assent of faith that is inquisitive. Apart from that, assenting is an act of the will; whereas faith has its anchorage in the intellect, since its object is the true.

Aquinas explains. Let one believe and forthwith his thinking is enriched with assent.

1. The authority of St. Augustine itself carries. Its weight alone establishes proof proper and probable in theology.

Norms. It is methodical procedure in expounding sacred doctrine to honor the authority of doctors of the Church as of itself competent, at least to the extent of being probable. Holy Scripture ranks as a basic necessity, whenever available. Philosophers are appealed to in building up extrinsic arguments on scales of probability only in the domain of faith.¹

In this perspective, adopted from Aquinas, St. Augustine by his phraseology voices a proper theological argument that is probable, although not certain. That is why the following Jansenist assertion has been condemned:

"Granted that one finds a doctrine clearly established to the satisfaction of St. Augustine, he is absolutely free to hold and teach it, without having regard for any papal bull" (Denz. 1320).

One's attitude soars to a higher plane, relative to specific teaching by St. Augustine that has met with the Church's approval. The second Council of Orange, for instance, incorporates a great number of passages, word for word, from the Saint's doctrinal writings into its own lucubrations.

But when there is unanimity of consent among the fathers of the Church on a particular doctrine of faith, their unanimity furnishes theologians with an argument that is certain.²

2. There is available a theological argument to show that Augustine's definition is correct, and that it applies to an act of faith of either kind, whether divine or human.

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 1, a. 8, ad 1.

² Cf. DeGroot, *De Ecclesia* (1906), p. 785.

Nature and function of a definition. It must be borne in mind that a definition is not produced by a demonstrative deduction. It results rather from comparative induction and the division of a genus. Aristotle makes it clear that a real definition composed of a genus and differential is not a demonstration. It is the base of demonstration for ensuing properties. It is obtained by a descending division of the supreme genus, coupled with an ascending comparative induction, wherein the term defined is compared with other similar and dissimilar things. It bespeaks a manner of searching or hunting dictated by a confused concept which first engenders a nominal definition.³

Mental operations. Let us now compare the act of believing with other similar mental processes, seeing, knowing, opining.

Thinking may be spoken of in three ways: 1) To think may mean to engage in ordinary consideration, such as is indulged in by looking things over or by learning about them. 2) Thinking may involve a degree of investigation, advancing toward positive perception or vision. In this sense, as St. Augustine explains, the "Word of God exists without any thinking on God's part." To think implies motion such as that which sets the intellect deliberating before it becomes perfect, through the full possession of the light of truth. God's personal Word, from the first, is seen and sees simultaneously without degrees or bounds. 3) To think is an act of the cogitative faculty, dominating within one, in conjunction with the sensitive memory, and determining one by one what the thinker chooses to do. In human beings it matches the estimative power that works instinctively in the lower grades of animal life.

It is with thinking in the second way that St. Augustine's expression is to be identified when the assent of faith transfuses the thought.

Regarding the two factors required for a definition, namely, the divisive judgment, cleaving a genus, and the comparative induction that matches it, they generate a syllogism, not illative but explicative. Here, we formulate the syllogism.

Believing: Believing is like knowing or understanding, inasmuch as it adheres firmly to revealed truth. Thought of this kind lacks the perfection there is in manifestly seeing. It shares this defect in common with opinion. But this double phase of believing is adequately expressed in the clause, "to think with assent." Therefore, the definition crystallizing St. Augustine's idea is a good one. It distinguishes the act of believing from all other operations of the intellect affecting what is true and what

³ Cf. Aristotle, *Post. Anal.*, II.

is false. Thereby, without acquiring the force of a demonstration, it is discovered to be a methodical presentation, an analytical definition of the act of faith as reducible to a genus, while retaining a specific differential.

In St. Augustine's definition, thinking corresponds to a genus which embraces also opinion and the exercise of scientific inquiry or research. The accompanying assent differentiates the act specifically by barring mere opinion.

The thinking which is identified with believing is also different from the brand that promotes progress in science. It lasts as long as faith remains active; but scientific scrutiny ceases once evidence is established by demonstration. Faith never breaks with its own thought, for no truth of pure faith can be made evident, nor can any such truth be demonstrated.

Augustine's definition may be reversed: "To believe is to assent with thinking." Believing is an intellectual operation that consists in "assenting to the truths of faith at the command or determination of the will."⁴

Discursive thought. What does inquiring thought or discursive meditation effect in the cultivation of faith or the multiplication of its acts? Of what use is it? It keeps man's faith reverently alive to the proprieties of faith, just because God has pledged his Word in revealing; and also because of the distinction adorning faith from the confirmation of divine mysteries by miracles. Furthermore, the mind may browse on the very content of definite mysteries. Take the Trinity, for example: How can God be one and three? The connection between subject and predicate is indissoluble, yet never evident.

But if discursive thought lends itself to investigation, what then becomes of the firm adhesion to truth? Adherence to revealed mysteries is not dependent on antecedent knowledge of the fact of revelation. Neither does it grow out of consideration bestowed on any obscure mystery—predestination, for instance. Proud minds find this situation repugnant.

The intellect of a believer is riveted to one thing, faith in its integrity. It is not compelled by reason; it is *impelled* by the will. [We will to believe.] The assent of faith, therefore, must always be understood as an attitude of the intellect, comparable to the flight of an arrow toward its target, due to a single aim first determined upon and controlled by the will.

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2.

The liberty of the believer is not only the freedom to act or not to act, to consider or not consider—it is also the freedom of choosing particular objects or mysteries to uphold or to repudiate. It is full liberty in the matters that philosophers designate as action or exercise and specification. The latter brand contributes to the variety of heresies springing forth from mental litigation. "I will believe," but, "I will not believe" the individual mysteries of predestination and eternal punishment. Fanaticism might sweep into the ascendancy. "My mind is made up to tear down faith," because of its obscurity and "unpleasant doctrines." [Who should bother about hell or the asbestos creature called the devil?]

Therefore, to believe truly is to bend one's intellect to assent, by power stored in one's will.

To make profitable the search which rounded out the definition of a definition in its bearing on faith, by paralleling the analysis of the act of faith as the dovetailing of a lacerated genus and a comparative induction, it is well here to offer a résumé of a pertinent article in St. Thomas, *De Veritate*.⁵

Judgment. To believe has to do with judging logically. The mental operation called "judgment" is not to be confounded either with simple apprehension or reasoning. Nevertheless, it encounters a fourfold state of mind in its processes.

It matters not whether one's judgment has already taken shape or remains to be formed. It may be either certain or uncertain. A judgment not steadied by certitude may be either a doubt or an opinion. If it wavers equally between two opposites it is a doubt. If it inclines more to one side than to an opposite, it is an opinion. Mere opinion, strictly so-called, makes room always for a fear that its opposite may be true.

Just so soon as a judgment attains to certitude, however, the intellect assents determinately to one side, definitely excluding all opposites. The position may be due to the evidence of an object or to the exercise of one's own free choice or will power. When the object is evident in itself, the judgment about it is said to be intuitive. Such a judgment guarantees the acceptance of first principles immediately on presentation. When an object is not evident in itself, it may become evident by the aid of research and demonstration. Intuitive judgments are all immediate. Indirect or mediate judgments build up the body of science. [Faith is different from all of them.]

⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1; *De Revelatione*, I, 443.

The Judgment of Faith. The judgment, in virtue of which one believes, is dictated and imposed by the will. It does not concern any matter that is perspicuous in itself. Its object lacks evidence. When men believe in one another or in God, they do so because it is good to assent to the testimony of witnesses, because of the authority recognized in the witnesses themselves.⁶

The act of faith is characterized by an equalization between assent and thought [a compenetration, so to speak]. In knowledge, thought leads on to assent and rests in it. Rather, active thinking and investigation end there. The assent exercised in opining has less firmness. The thought engendering it is partially out of balance. A fear that the opposite may be true does not equal the inclination voiced as an opinion. Until it does, the opinion will prevail.

From this it follows that, in a conflict between a less probable and a more probable opinion, the less probable one loses its right to be taken as seriously probable.

It would be well at this point to assimilate the content of Article 1, in St. Thomas' Question Fourteen of the *De Veritate*: "The intellect of the believer is described as held captive, since it is fastened within boundaries fixed by another, apart from its own. The said boundaries 'bring every understanding into captivity, unto the obedience of Christ'" (2 Cor. 10:5). This explains why and how indeliberate impulses can actuate a believer, in ways running contrary to what he holds most firmly through faith. It happens, as it were, "before one knows it" and not in an intelligent way. The handicap is shared in common by human as well as divine faith.

On the other hand, a deliberate doubt is incompatible with actual faith. A believer's will is so made up that it would be a sin against faith. Doubt withdraws the mind from the infallible motive of faith, namely, Prime Truth revealing. Infallibly and supernaturally, we are under an obligation to stick to the faith, with the assistance of grace, braving even the torments of martyrdom.

Procedure. Later on we shall take up the nature of the pious movement in the will, which enters into the act of faith. It is nonexistent in those who stand against the preaching of the Gospel, known miracles notwithstanding. In due course we shall pave the way for understanding the merit attaching to the act of faith, a subject reserved for the end of this article. After that it is our purpose to treat more at length a ques-

⁶ The analysis of judgment given here is tabulated by the author.—Tr.

tion, quite alive today, regarding the necessity of active faith in working out one's salvation.

Article 2

What Do Believing in a God, Believing God, and Believing in God Mean?

Is it right to distinguish a variety in acts of faith, such as believing or in a god, believing God, believing in God?

Statement of the question. The three mental processes recounted are found in St. Augustine.¹ If they are well grounded, it looks as though the act of faith were of a threefold nature. Rather, it would imply three acts in one. When I confess that God is triune, I am likewise professing my faith in a god and my faith in true God. This gives the act of faith a triple facet. It seems to run counter to the simplicity of the knowledge which we have shown to be expressed without discursiveness in the declaration of one's faith. Furthermore, to believe in a god underlies every act of faith. It cannot be extricated from the other acts of faith.

Conclusion. The triple variety of expressions furnished by St. Augustine signifies only a triple relationship that may be considered between one and the same act of faith, measuring up to its proper object.

Theological explanation. An act of any power or habit is classified according to its relation with some one object. But in the premises, the single object of faith affects the mind in three ways. It is a material object, a formal motive, and compared with the will, it is an end determined upon. Therefore, without detriment to its unity, one and the same act involves: (1) believing God—its formal object *quod* and the material object believed; (2) believing in a God—its formal object *quo*; (3) believing in God—the purpose effected through the action of the will, intent upon causing the intellect to elicit its act of faith.

More clearly put, the act of believing proceeds conjointly from the intellect and will. The intellect apprehends its double object, material and formal. Its material object is belief in God revealed. He is triune and the author of grace. Its formal object is belief in God revealing. The contribution of the will is to engineer the mental process up to God who is Prime Truth, attainable as a final goal. This is believing in God.

¹ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Verbis Domini*, sermon 61, on John, near the middle of treatise 29.

The distinction of Augustine is maintained; objections to it vanish.

Confirmation through the solution of objections. We are dealing with the *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, Question 2, Article 2. In replying to the fourth objection, Aquinas explains how Prime Truth becomes connected with the will, since it is a goal to be attained. The will serves as a motor for the intellect and for all accessory spiritual powers needed to reach the end, and this procedure is "believing in God." The attraction of the will is styled a "pious movement." The action it transmits is an imperative energizing of the mental faculties. As promised, we shall bring this out more clearly in dealing with the merit of an act of faith.

Meanwhile it is important to warn that tending toward God as the last end by believing in him requires one's faith to be living. It must be activated and dictated by charity. This occurs only in souls that are living in the state of grace. They are called the just.

Nevertheless, those of the faithful who are in the state of mortal sin, which voids them of charity, but who have not broken with infused faith, believe truly in God, however imperfectly. They are not indeed believing in God as actually loved [by them] above all things; but they are believing in him as the dispenser of "words of eternal life," who has promised eternal beatitude as the reward of faith. Sinners see that it is good to believe in God but they do not love God effectively above all things.

To believe God is allegedly possible for infidels. Culture may make of it a boast. It amounts to a hazy natural acceptance of proof for the existence of God. Assent thereto would be wrongly confounded with the assent of theological faith, owing to a different formal motive. Furthermore, knowledge that infidels possess about God is usually mixed up with a lot of errors, so that they do not believe God even when they claim to do so. St. Thomas' reply to the third objection is fundamental: God is simple and, as Aristotle asserts, "to know simple things defectively is not to know them at all."

Simplicity of Faith. Infused faith clings to its formal motive, immediately and without reserve, in virtue of the same identical act by which it welcomes any particular mystery that has been revealed. As shown above, this teaching of Cajetan is also our own. St. Thomas reinforces it in the article on which we are dwelling.² In conjunction, therefore, with any particular revealed doctrine, like the Incarnation or the Trinity, an act of faith in it is at the same time an act of faith in God as Prime Truth, because of the fact that he has revealed it and in his authority

² Cf. Cajetan's commentary on the *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 1, n. II.

which makes faith infallible. By one act alone, the *Credo* of a simple believer, issuing from infused faith, extends to God revealing and to God revealed, to the triune God as the final object, deliberately chosen by the will, through the mind, as the goal of the intellect's aim. This was not perceived by Suárez. Otherwise, he would not have mutilated a simple act as though it were a chain of three.

In discussing the formal motive of faith, St. Thomas declares: "The formal object of faith is Prime Truth revealing. By inhering thereto, man ends by assenting, on its account, to whatever else is believed. The inherence is supernatural and immediate, without questioning the mental species which represent it. It would follow otherwise that 'the alleged formal motive for believing would not be of a nature to specify infused faith, but would derive whatever force it has, from some alien formal motive, such as the principle of an argumentation that would be known naturally.'" A pertinent example would be the evidence associated naturally with the fact of God's veracity, backed up by the additional evidence of miracles.

If infused faith were like this, it would forfeit its essential supernatural character, its unimpeachable certitude. The makeshift certitude would dwindle formally into a sheer moral certainty affecting nothing beyond the existence of miracles and other signs similar to those that bolster up revelation outwardly.

In this connection Cajetan refers to an objection of Durandus that runs like this: "To believe in a God and to believe God overlap in the same act; but to believe in God postulates two acts proceeding from two different habits, namely, faith and charity. Believing in God means going to God by the way of faith and love."

Cajetan replies: An act, numerically one and the same, proceeds from the virtue which dictates it and from the virtue which elicits it. Religious chastity illustrates the case. Its exercise results from the moral virtue of chastity, from the virtue of religion, and from infused charity. Similarly, an act of living faith, dictated by God-love, preserves its numerical identity, its isolated singularity, notwithstanding that it proceeds from two subordinated habits. In line with this reasoning, we contend that infused contemplation has its substance from infused faith; the measure of its penetration from the gift of understanding; its relish from the gift of wisdom. We have written this many times and yet Père de Guibert ascribes to us an opposite view which we have never upheld.

Corollary. Perfect belief in God requires charity; but imperfect faith is possible without charity. Perfect faith requires charity; for in believ-

ing, the mind is made up to get nearer to God as our last end. The just man alone is capable of perfect faith in God. It is only in the just man that the act of faith can be stirred up by a will that is making actual headway toward God by loving him effectively more than all else.

Nevertheless, while in the state of mortal sin, the faithful retain their belief in God, however imperfect it may be. To deny this is to encounter an anathema fulminated by the Council of Trent: "If anybody says that the loss of grace through sin drives out faith, or that whatever of faith survives is a counterfeit, and something less than dead faith, or if one says that faith possessed without charity is unchristian, let him be anathema" (Denz. 838). The imperfection of faith in sinful souls comes from its failure to reach God as the one loved above all things. To repeat, they hold it is good to believe in God who dispenses the words of eternal life and who has promised a beatific reward to those who are faithful.

Affective interior motivation. The situation stimulates inquiry into the nature of that "pious motion" in the will which precedes the act of faith in saint and sinner alike. It is distinct from charity. It is different from hope. What is it?

Aquinas touches upon this inquiry in Articles 9 and 10 (IIa IIae, q. 2), when treating of the meritoriousness of the act of faith. For the sake of clearness we shall, by anticipation, introduce the content of those articles here. It will amount to a transposition. But in deferring the subject which the Angelic Doctor treats next, the necessity of faith for salvation, the preparation will be better; and greater freedom will be possible in developing a lengthier analysis of the major topic.

This exceptional departure from the arrangement of St. Thomas is one of present convenience only. It is not intended to offset the normal order followed by St. Thomas, in which the necessity of faith for salvation serves as the grand perspective of merit accumulated by the performance of successive acts of faith along the way.

Article 9

Is It Meritorious to Believe?

This is an anticipation of Article 9 of Question 2 (*Summa theol.*, IIa IIae).

Statement of difficulties: 1) The principle of merit is infused charity,

yet an act of faith can be made without charity. 2) Believing stands midway between knowing and opining. There is no merit in merely knowing or opining. Why should there be merit in believing? 3) The inducement for believing is either sufficient of itself or insufficient. If it is sufficient, there is no merit. If it is not sufficient, then an act of faith is an act of credulity. Credulity, however, even though slight, has no claim to merit.

Reply. An act of faith can be meritorious. This does not mean that it is always supernaturally meritorious, because, when made by unrepentant sinners, it is not meritorious.

1. *Proof from Holy Scripture* (Heb. 11:33). Through faith God's holy ones "obtained promises." This could not be were it not for their merit in believing.¹

2. *Authority of Church Councils.* The First Vatican Council ruled: "If anybody says that assent to Christian faith is not free, but that it is a product resulting necessarily from arguments advanced by human reasoning, or that the grace of God is necessary only for a living faith that works through charity, let him be anathema" (Denz. 1791, 1814).²

From this canon it follows that an act of living faith is meritorious precisely because it is free and animated by charity. The condemnation is against Hermes. Another proposition, ascribed to Pico della Mirandola was banned by Innocent VIII. It maintained that the assent of faith is probably necessary and not free, by asserting: "It is not within the power of man to believe that an article of faith is true, when it pleases, nor to believe it is false, when it displeases" (Denz. 736). This dictum was stigmatized as erroneous and smacking of heresy. The reasons were that a proud man, in spite of obvious signs accompanying revelation, may sometimes turn against the mysteries of predestination and eternal punishment because of their unpleasantness; whereas a just man will keep loyal in his assent to them and accumulate an abundance of merit by his firmness in the midst of ferocious temptations.

3. *Theological proof.* The merit of an act is due to its being of one's own free choice, at the dictate of charity or God-love. But an act of faith is an act of intellectual assent to divine truth at the discretion of a

¹ The author refers in general to numerous other texts, particularly the following selected by Faucher in his edition of the *Summa*: Ps. 80:12; Is. 65:1; Mt. 8:10, 9:22, 15:28; Mk. 16:16; Lk. 1:45; Jn. 15:22, 20:29; Acts 6:7, 7:51, 13:46, 17:32-34; Rom. 4:3, 10:10-16; Gal. 3:8.—Tr.

² Cf. Gal. 5:6; Council of Orange II, can. 5 (Denz. 178); Trent, sess. 6, chap. 6 (Denz. 798); First Vatican, sess. 2, chap. 3, can. 5.

will that is free and that may be perfected through charity. Therefore, an act of faith can be meritorious and is actually meritorious in a man who is just. No difficulty remains.

The major premise has been explained in the corollary closing the preceding article. The doctrine is that of Aquinas.³

The minor has also been explained. Faith has to do with things not seen. Its object, therefore, does not move or stir it. This leaves one's personal assent entirely at his own discretion, both as to its bestowal or retention, and its specification. Even in the presence of miracles, one is free to say: "I choose not to believe; I am unwilling to believe. I shall take measures not to believe because certain mysteries, eternal punishment, for instance, are revolting."

Reply to difficulty I. No act of faith is supernaturally meritorious unless it proceeds from charity. Once charity grows active, even natural acts like eating and drinking, when otherwise virtuously chosen and determined upon, become meritorious. Being free, voluntary, and directed toward God as loved above all things, they rank with merit as tokens of God-love.

Reply to difficulty II. The assent of the learned to science is not meritorious. It is compulsory and not free, if compared with true knowledge. But in investigating, the actual pondering of a thing that is known is free. One may consider it or not; one may consider this to the exclusion of that other object, freely and with merit, if only one be dominated by a spirit of charity. For this reason, the teaching of philosophy and theology gains merit, on condition of its being animated by charity; and all the more so, if, with charity, it is imposed as a work of religious obedience.

In the exercise of faith, meditative consideration as well as assent are matters of free choice. They coalesce in acts of faith—a fact that renders such acts sharers in the merit of both of them.

An opinion can be meritorious, especially in its considerations, as when one decides to stick to an opinion just because St. Thomas adopted it, out of the love of God. Here we might introduce the acceptance of the twenty-four propositions summarizing the capital truths extracted from the teachings of St. Thomas, and canonically approved as an authentic list by the Roman Congregation of Studies in 1914.

Reply to difficulty III. Every correct believer has sufficient inducement for believing, but no such inducement suffices to make what he

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 114, aa. 3-4.

believes in obvious of itself. Hence, in considering the catechetical truths of faith and assenting to them, the believer is acting freely and accumulating supernatural merit.

Article 10

Is Merit Diminished When One Embraces the Truths of Faith Because Persuaded Thereto by Inductive Reasoning?

For reasons previously assigned, the treatment here of the question just submitted is an anticipation of Article 10 (IIa IIae, q. 2).

Statement of the question. To expedite the issue, it might be put this way. Is the faith of a laborer in coal mines more meritorious than that of a theologian? Perplexity can result from confronting arguments already advanced with one another. For instance: 1) St. Gregory denies merit to faith that can be experienced by human reason. 2) A rational inducement to believe diminishes the obscurity of faith. It interferes with the very idea of virtue. 3) Persecution and temptation against faith increase merit in believing. In the obscure night of the spirit, grave temptations assault the faith. Dense darkenings approach a blackout. Yet, they are the direct causes of promotion to greater merit for the believer who perseveres. This being true, clear rational insight, because of its oppositeness, must reduce merit in believers who are dominated by it.

Still, St. Peter has a caution that should be heeded. "Keep ready to offer everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pt. 3:15). The faithful should be competent to explain to others who lack faith the motives which make the mysteries of faith deserving of belief, that is to say, evidently credible. St. Peter would never have been drawn to give such counsel, if, through its observance, the merit of faith were to shrink.

What then is the solution of the problem raised, for the conciliation of authorities and reasons that seem opposed to one another? A distinction is necessary and it must be of the right kind to trace the path to truth.

Solution. Article 10 of the *Summa theologiae* (IIa IIae, q. 2) reveals the key. St. Thomas teaches: The natural inducement which determines

human reason to believe lessens the merit of faith when it grips the will directly and bends it to believe, by usurping, as it were, in advance, the function of a formal motive in assenting. This does not occur when inducements multiply after the free assent to faith has been given. Rather, the latter class of inductions passes as a sign of increased merit.

Proof. The first part of the solution has to take into account that the merit of faith depends entirely on the subject's liberty to assent or not to assent; and if assenting is determined upon, the exclusive motive must be divine authority and not any purely human rational motive. But if a human inducement prevails in the assent beforehand and serves the purpose of its formal motive, reason is no longer basing its acquiescence exclusively on divine authority. This is what effects the shrinkage of merit.

The major has already been sufficiently clarified.

The minor is evident. The case is verified when one's will is not disposed at all, or at least is not disposed to believe promptly, without recurring to human calculations.

Gospel Examples. 1. The doubting Thomas. After Christ arose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples at first in the absence of Thomas. He showed them his wounded hands and feet. Eight days later he repeated the manifestation in the presence of Thomas. He did so in a manner that illustrates our thesis.

St. John narrates: "Thomas, one of the Twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came [on the evening of the Resurrection]. The other disciples therefore said to him: 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them: 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'"

And, a week later, when Thomas was with the others, Jesus appeared and accepted the challenge, saying to the doubter: 'Put in thy finger hither and see my hands. Bring hither thy hand and put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' Thomas answered: 'My Lord and my God.' Jesus said to him: 'Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and have believed' " (Jn. 20:19, 24-28).¹

2. The Disciples of Emmaus. Our position gains strength from the Lords reproach to them: "O foolish ones, so slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken" (Lk. 24:25).

¹ Cf. Comm. of St. Thomas on this passage; *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 55, a. 5 ad 3.

3. Peter on the waters. Jesus came to the Disciples "Walking upon the sea" . . . and to Peter he said: 'Come.' Then Peter, going down out of the boat walked upon the water . . . suddenly grew afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried out: 'Lord, save me.' Jesus immediately said to him: 'O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?' (Mt. 26:25, 29, 31.)

4. Frightened Disciples. As a group their faith began to shrink more than once. They were reprehended for it during the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus reasoned: "If God clothes the grass in the field [the same as the lilies], how much more you, O ye of little faith?" (Mt. 7:30.) Another reproof was administered when they rudely awakened Jesus who was sleeping in a storm-tossed boat: "Lord, save us. We are perishing." 'What is there to make you fearful, O ye of little faith?' (Mt. 8:26.) Again, after denouncing the leaven used by the wicked and adulterous generation he said: "Why are you disturbed in your minds, O ye of little faith?" The disciples felt guilty in having let their material bread-supply run out (Mt. 16:8).

These examples show clearly what St. Thomas wishes to bring out. He does not wish to say that man must believe without knowing why. He is entitled to have evident reasons, called motives of credibility, for the faith that is in him. "Nobody would believe," he declares, "unless he sees that the mysteries of faith should be assented to, on account of manifest signs or some equivalent."²

In every case, familiarity with the terms of believing come before the act of faith in the order of time. Otherwise the assent to faith would not be prudent. The particular motives inducing belief stop at the beginning of the formal intellectual assent without getting mixed up with it. The merit of faith is thus unscathed. [The starter is not the thing started. The assent in question begins at the instant when the motor, not the antecedent motive which charged it, gets into formal contact with the only right lane on the pavement—God's authority in revealing. Thereafter, the roadmap directs progress, which is more than the previous stagnant and vacuous information.—Tr.]

Preambles. Speaking scholastically, the motives of credibility, summed up popularly as the "evidences of Christianity," operate prior to the act of faith in the matter of time. They are on the wrong level to figure as an antecedent link in its distinct, intrinsic causality. Billuart writes correctly that, "if the motives of credibility get so active previ-

² *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 4 ad 2.

ously, as to become in the end an objective cause of assenting to faith—if they invade the intellect so as to form, of themselves, a real measure integrating the act of believing, on a par with divine truth, thereby sharing with divine authority a composite formal reason for believing—they cannot but reduce the merit of faith." It is a condition in which preliminary motives flow over, with the result that they identify themselves, in a common genus, with a form that is divine. This is the mistake which restricts merit in believing. It prevents the full and necessary subjection of intelligence, by the use of one's will, to the sole authority of God as revealer. It crowds simplicity out of the acceptance of God's veracity. Yet, these two elements are what make up the formal object *quo*. They constitute the only valid motive in believing.

The Rebuke. It is this alloy of gold and lead in the exercise of faith that is appraised as demerit in the rebuke: "O ye of little faith!" It is a kind of double deal. There is assent to infused faith, acting as a grace, and simultaneously there is a spoiling of the same by an assent to natural motivation, however rational, to human instinct and respect.

Pure Faith. It is more than possible that such a compound is often found in the rank and file of common people. It cannot be gotten rid of without passive purification of the spirit. Through that ordeal, in the face of temptations against faith itself, huge merit is accumulated; for the soul then believes with greatest purity, having no bulwark but God's own solitary authority in revealing; and because of it, remaining staunch and fairly immovable, be temptations what they may and the obscurity of mysteries, especially predestination, worse than the blackest night. And yet this suffocating darkness goes on increasing. The demon assaults with tempests, until finally the tables turn. There is depth, there is altitude in these secrets, and little by little the soul consciously penetrates both. They grow transluminous in a new black light, the dazzling "inaccessible light" wherein God dwells (cf. Tm. 6:16).

Would that De Lugo had understood this. It would have kept him from subscribing to a faith that remains discursive, enfolding normally within its formal motive, the promulgation by the Church reinforced by miracles.

First corollary. Passive purifications of the spirit, as described by St. John of the Cross in his wonderful work, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, increase marvelously the merit of faith. They deliver it from every admixture and, with regard to human perception, they bring out the towering eminence of the formal motive of faith as an essentially super-

natural phenomenon, actually experienced in a way immeasurably superior to the dwarfed motives of credibility. After all, is not the authority of God as author of grace, to which pure faith adheres supernaturally and infallibly, infinitely above and beyond whatever calculations might be built on the mere rational evidence of miracles?

When contemplative souls are going through these passive purifications, it would be slender help to advise them to study "some good treatise on apologetics," as if the assent of faith could be resolved back into a conviction about the evidence of miracles. [A sanctuary is not the place for either graceful or awkward flopping.]

Better counsel would be this: "Pray . . . I believe, Lord, help my unbelief" (Mk. 9:23). Actual efficacious grace must be sought, for nothing less than the gift to believe most firmly and supernaturally without deviation.

Similar treatment is in order for souls whose spiritual distress might be thus exemplified: "My father has died without absolution. It makes the mystery of predestination too hard for me to believe." "Pause, my friend. Raise your heart to God. Pray. Beseech Christ and his Blessed Mother Mary for actual fervent faith." Flee to Jesus, Prime Truth—to Jesus the Way, Truth, and Life—choose him for your refuge. He bestows on minds and hearts the "peace of God that surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

The merit of faith is increased insofar as the will grows more prompt and firm in believing. Opposition, trials, and persecution may bring this about.³ Persecutions, however, may not increase merit, unless, as occasions offer, the promptness of the will is sharpened in honoring God's authority in what faith teaches. [We "believe what the Church teaches because God has revealed it." "Because" emphasizes the formal motive.]

Second corollary. Faith must be kept active. If it fails in this, if it is no longer moved by the fact that it is God who reveals it, even though an indifferent assent survives and is professed, there is no longer any merit in it.

Even in demons there is a kind of faith. It is forced upon them through the manifestation of signs. No praise to them therefore, if they assent. They cannot help doing so and they would far rather not believe. (The formal treatment of this topic is reserved for Question 5, article 2, below.)

Formal heretics who accept certain dogmas only, assent to those doc-

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 4 ad 3.

trines, but without supernatural faith. Their choice, even when denominational, is dictated by a human motive, by personal judgment or self-will intensified by party-spiritedness.

In Christians whose faith is true, but uninformed by charity because of mortal sin, a gift of God still works in them. Many of them enjoy the power generated by the valid formal motive. "They believe." Their assent is reverent. They are obviously influenced by a real affection for "the faith." They do not break with the desire of one day becoming "worthy of the promises of Christ," especially in the next world.

The doctrine we have been developing derives confirmation from the ethical analogy of antecedent passion. In morals, a passion antecedent to the determination to act may lessen the praise and merit due for a virtuous performance. The reason is this: in the cultivation of moral virtue man should discipline himself according to rational judgment; otherwise, a passion may run away with him. Even what is good in passion needs to be controlled by reason. A soldier fighting for his country should aim at his country's welfare positively, and not use warfare to glut vengeance on enemies held in abhorrence.

For an act of any virtue to be perfectly meritorious, it must proceed from a love of virtue for virtue's sake, animated by charity, the "principle, mother, and queen" of all virtues. This is possible when there has been no influx into the virtuous act from a previous stirring up of passion as its cause. But let a passionate impulse ride into the virtuous performance as part of the human act, the admixture cripples the accompanying virtuousness and may even destroy it. The passive purification of sense life is ordained toward the deliverance of the moral virtues from every imperfection in their motivation. [Hence, it is perfection in faith that makes for purity of intention and self-mastery as subordinates.]

The second part of St. Thomas' solution, a second key to the meritoriousness of faith, works in the same way as for the moral virtues: "If human reason grows active because of its zeal in willing to assent to faith, the merit of the act produced is increased, instead of being diminished."

Proof. In the case presented, the believer displays a will on the alert to believe, a love for the truth believed in, and an ensuing disposition to investigate the things of faith. In the language of St. Anselm, it is the faith itself that is here seeking improvement through understanding.

Theologians of holiness are noted for having readily indulged this spirit. The First Vatican Council promoted it. Granted that reason is illumined by faith, it is aroused to search "sedulously, piously and soberly," and welcome from God whatever additional understanding will be given. One's industry thus grows prolific. New analogies spring into view between what one learns about naturally and the content of mysteries, as compared in their connections with one another and with man's last end. Within such a horizon there is no inclination to short-circuit truths, as though they were no more than a tempting dish for one's personal gratification (cf. Denz. 1796).

Boundary of Reason. Rational findings, the upshot of this reverent occupation, do not amount to a demonstration. Their function is to remove hindrances to the faith by showing that what faith proposes for belief is not impossible. Indeed, the intrinsic possibility of mysteries is not open to demonstration. All that reason can accomplish is to show that, since they belong to the supernatural domain, their intrinsic possibility cannot be disproved. Reason does not and cannot comprehend them.

Let it be recalled that the motives of credibility do not lessen the merit of faith, because they have no part in actually motorizing assent or coloring it with their own form. Without pushing, they merely clear the way for the intellect to exercise itself calmly in believing through the sole acceptance of divine authority.

Once they have served their purpose, as Billuart points out, the formal motive of faith acquires its full independent vigor. The influx makes it an adequate cause of faith's assenting, as may be illustrated by the following comparison: When a master hands out principles to a student, the latter yields to them because they are self-evident. The master's reliability is that of his correctness in transmitting.

But the necessity of the transmission is another thing. Until it takes place the student does not know; he will not understand nor grasp the truth that fails to be conveyed. Against this background the Samaritans supply a parallel recorded by St. John. They are addressing a converted woman. "We now believe, not for thy saying. We ourselves have heard him and know that this indeed is the Savior of the World" (Jn. 4.42).⁴

This ethical teaching is confirmed by an analogy. Consequent passion balances antecedent passion. It does not interfere with merit; rather, it signifies an aftermath, caused by the agility of the will. The corresponding pro-passion in our Lord operated in the same way when Jesus drove

⁴ Cf. commentary of Aquinas on St. John 4:42.

the moneychangers out of the temple: "It is written: My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves" (Mt. 21:12-13). Occasions arise when indignation of the kind needs to be stirred up. Thus Cajetan comments.

Holy zeal is not a capering like that of sectaries and fanatics. It is the flame and heat of faith and charity. The Psalmist celebrates it in the words: "The zeal of thy house has devoured me" (Ps. 68:10); and again: "Be angry and sin not" (Ps. 4:5). [Antecedent passion spoils through explosiveness. Consequent passion is cylindered for long, powerful, smooth driving afterwards.]

Corollary. It would be erroneous to mistake sectarianism for faith or a humane liberalism for true charity. Charity never forgets God's rights over all things and because their lovableness, which surpasses those of any neighbor. It cannot confound the semirationalistic approach to Sacred Scripture with the sacred study of the mysteries of faith. Nor does it align itself with the wisdom of this world to the detriment of wisdom descending from above.

Doubt one. Does the clear demonstration of the preambles to faith lessen the merit of faith? It is true that details thus clarified at the border of faith forfeit a measure of obscurity that at first made them like the faith, but the perfection they had in being dictated by charity remains. Believers are disposed to assent readily, even though no demonstration was available in advance. They will to believe. They do believe. There is no loss of merit.

Doubt two. When sinners assent to the faith, must they be drawn thereto by a pious movement in the will?

The answer must be affirmative.

Proof I. From Holy Writ. "Unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (Phil. 1:20); "With the heart we believe unto justice" (Rom. 10:10). It is Scriptural usage to designate the will as one's heart, comments Aquinas, so that through will-action the intellect bows in faith. "Faith is a gift of God," St. Paul told the Ephesians (2:8); As such it survives even the loss of charity. What can then be left to actuate it except a pious movement in the will?

Proof II. Tradition. The truth is riveted in this signal statement of St. Augustine: "You may enter a church against your will. If forced, you may go up to the altar in spite of yourself. But to believe, you have to will it." Believing in God is a pious deed. Therefore, even sinners must be brought to believe by a pious stirring of the will.

Proof III. Council of Orange. In condemning semi-Pelagianism it

ruled: "If anyone says that man has it in himself naturally, not only to increase his faith but also to originate it by an inherent credulous affection—and that in so doing one engenders faith in him who justifies the wicked . . . the operation is not due to a gift of God, that is, it has no dependence on any inspiration of the Holy Ghost actually correcting one's will by transferring it from infidelity to faith nor from impiety to piety—such a one is a deliberate antagonist to the Apostolic teaching thus crystallized: 'Faith is a gift of God' " (Eph. 2:8) (Denz. 178).

Against the humanist Pico della Mirandola, a similar directive was launched. "The assent of faith is free and through it man pays obedient homage to God" (Denz. 736). The First Vatican Council is more explicit: "No one can yield consent to the preaching of the Gospel without interior enlightenment and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is God's Holy Spirit who dispenses sweetness to all who consent to the truth and believe it. Wherefore, faith itself, in itself, even when it fails to operate through charity, is a gift of God. And an act of faith is a deed related to salvation, which can be resisted, but ought to be consented to and co-operated with" (Denz. 1791–1814).

The Council of Trent declared openly that faith is not lost by every kind of sin, but only by infidelity. Hence, it can exist without charity and without hope, without ceasing to be "God's gift" to the sinner.⁵

Proof IV. Theological proof. The necessity of the pious movement of the will for believing is based on theses expounded elsewhere (cf. Question I, Article 4, and Question 2, Article 1 ad 3).

Whenever an obscure supernatural object is proposed to the intellect, faith in it requires a pious motion in the will, by reason of its supernaturalness. This is what happens when mysteries of faith or the Gospel are expounded. Therefore, nobody can believe the Gospel in a way ordained to salvation unless his will is set in motion by this pious gift.

The major is certain. The obscureness of the object of faith prevents it from compelling any reaction in the intellect. Hence, the need of some other cause to move the will into action and dispose it to make a choice of what it shall do and why. The supernaturalness of the object makes it imperative that the act of faith stirred up in its favor should also be supernatural, and that the interior act of willing it should likewise be supernatural. This is the reason: the act of the will, to be specified by an object, must belong to the same order as the object. Therefore, without the aid of grace, we cannot even wish or will anything that is essentially

⁵ Cf. Trent, 808; Quesnel, 1302, 1401, 1407; Hermes, 1791.

supernatural; and that is what we must do in making up our mind or intellect to believe supernaturally.

The minor, too, is certain because of doctrine already expounded. Future explanations will intensify its strength.⁶

In discussing whether faith remains numerically one and the same, independently of the loss or restoration of charity, and whether dead faith, uninformed by charity, is a "gift of God," the angelic Patron of the Schools produces an example: Men are sometimes given faith without receiving the gift of charity. A catechumen, or convert in the making, may be endowed with attrition without contrition, in which case he possesses faith without charity. But whoever receives faith without charity from God is not entirely healed of infidelity, since the guilt of infidelity lasts on. Nevertheless, he is partially restored to soundness, insofar as he withdraws from a particular sin. "And take note of this," warns Cajetan, "when baptized subjects are in the state of mortal sin, or when heretics are converted to the faith without abandoning mortal sin," it is divine liberality that is being bestowed on aspirants disposed to assent to the faith without welcoming charity. An equivalent parallel materializes when a human soul is infused into embryonic conditions that are ripe for existence, but not for sound rational functioning. This happens in the birth of those who are demented from the womb.

Brief answers will suffice for objections directed against the need of some pious affection or motion in the will to stir it into believing.

1. Human faith has no need of such a stirring. Why should divine faith require it? Reply: If the objector will distinguish between sterling human faith and mere opinion he cannot warm up to an inevident object without fear of being deceived, unless impelled thereto by some kind of indirect persuasion.

Divine faith, being inflexible, is exercised with far greater difficulty than the trustfulness which humans acquire and require before they believe in one another. This is why, under exceptional pressure, mortals may exclaim: "I cannot believe it"; "I would have to see it first"; "I shall not believe." "It is only my opinion, I may be wrong." Divine faith cannot act in this way.

2. Why then do demons believe? They cannot be influenced by a pious movement in the will (cf. Jas. 2:19). Reply: Infused faith is not accorded to demons. Their faith is not divine. They have repudiated God's authority in revealing. Theirs is only an acquired faith into which

⁶ Cf. q. 4, a. 4 and q. 6, a. 2, below.

they are forced by the signs they see. This phenomenon will be taken up in Question 5, Article 2.

3. The will is a blind motor. It cannot specify. It either goes or stops as commanded. It is the intellect that responds to one formal object rather than another by its own choice.

In answer to this objection, the will may be influenced in more ways than one. Granting that the intellect is moved by an object clearly, the thing is so evident that the will power applied to it has nothing to do except make it go. But when the formal object perceived is wanting in clarity and the will itself is touched by it so as to react favorably or unfavorably, the will at once develops a new motion of its own. The motor itself is jarred and jarring. The result is a specific attachment to or a detachment from its ordinary momentum, with an effect engendering a new formality. The deviation cannot escape a new specification. The intellect consciously surveying the experience judges it good for the will to adhere to whichever alternative agrees with it. In the case we envisage, the attraction is to believe in God, without hesitating over the obscurity inherent in the love-secrets which God communicates as mysteries. This influx of the will into the process of specification as well as exercise, is governed by a principle taught by Aristotle: "A man is suited best by what he likes."⁷

Doubt three. How does the pious inclination to believe, differ from an act of charity or hope?

Reply. Contrary to Semi-Pelagian doctrine, the said inclination to believe is like charity and hope inasmuch as all three are free and supernatural endowments (cf. Denz. 178).

Both the pious disposition in advance and the initial infusion of faith proceed from God. There is a further agreement in that all three are concerned with supernatural good.

One must, however, take sides against the Jansenists and hold that the inclination of faith is different from charity. If it were not, no act of faith would be possible for people in mortal sin. The Jansenists were condemned for maintaining that "in great sinners, when love is extinguished, faith dies. Even in them who seem to believe, faith is human, not divine" (Denz. 1302). Quesnellian errors were equally pernicious and met with the same fate; for instance: "Faith is inactive except through charity"; "There is no faith without love and confidence"; "The complete collapse of a sinner has set in when he has lost hope and hope

⁷ *Ethics*, III, chap. 5, n. 17, lesson 13.

in God never survives when God-love is extinguished" (Denz. 1401-1402, 1407).

What, then, is the object of this affective disposition to believe, that matures by setting the will in motion? It is an interior surge of complacency, but not by reason of God's goodness in itself. This would be charity or real God-love. Neither does it spring toward God, with God's help, in view of God's becoming one's eternal possession. This would be hope. Its formal object is God's sovereign veracity. [He cannot be deceived; neither can he deceive.] In virtue of this motivation, the will bends the intellect to assent firmly to faith and repress all fear about erring. If Quesnell objects: "We do not believe our enemy," let him explain why I should not believe an enemy, whose truthfulness is otherwise known to me to be entirely above board.

God is not a foe to the soul of any sinner. It is the sinner who is a foe to God.⁸ The pious inclination toward faith is a liking for the sovereign truthfulness of God. This liking stirs up a willingness to believe, for it is good to believe any testimony that is backed up by signs as divine. Such an attitude falls short of hope; but it creates a leaning toward the reward which is promised to believers as a good thing.

St. Thomas analyzes the experience in these terms. "Belief in faith's teaching is stimulated through the knowledge that, if we choose to believe, a premium is held out to us in the form of eternal life. The premium becomes an attraction for the will and incites it to assent to the faith, even though the articles of faith remain obscure." "The beginning of faith" is thus reducible to "an affection that creeps into the will. Thereupon, follows a voluntary effect. The will determines the intellect to assent to whatever is of faith; but as yet there is neither an act of charity, nor an act of hope but only a nebulous desire for the attainment of the good that faith promises."⁹

If hope ensues, it is because over and above the bare appetite for reward, discerned as promised, a new factor of strength has appeared. It is a new formal motive, nothing less than God personally helping within. We call it "the divine assistance." As we shall show in the proper place, hope exceeds by far the initial velleity or mere wishing to gain possession of what is liked. Hope moves. An appetite is awakened. Hope urges it on to the attainment of a benefit, the expectation of which rallies arduous effort. A proportion, however, must exist between its formal motive and what hope aspires to. Therefore, hope, as a theologi-

⁸ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 444.

⁹ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2 ad 10.

cal virtue, must be infused to start out with, and no formal motive will suffice for it, short of God's personal help. Against this background, the familiar human observation is understandable: "My desire is still alive but I am gradually losing hope."

Believers are all favored with a desire to reap God's promises. This very pathetic affection was recognized by the Council of Orange in the sixth century (cf. Denz. 178). It is clearly what had animated St. Peter when he humbly exclaimed: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and we have believed" (Jn. 6:69).

This confession was occasioned by our Lord's tremendous warning to the vacillating multitude who swarmed about him: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." Many of his disciples complained: "This saying is hard. Who can stand it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them. . . . "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life; but there are some of you who believe not. . . . That is why I told you that no man can come to me, unless it be given him by my Father." Thereafter many of his disciples turned away and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said to the Twelve: "Will you also go away?" Simon Peter spoke out: "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and known that thou art the Christ the Son of God" (Jn. 6:54, 61-62, 64-70).

There can be no doubt. St. Peter's protestation was an outpouring of pious credence, but his affectionate disposition had been perfected through hope and charity.

Absolutely speaking, there can be an affection that takes the form of pious credence independently of, and even before any attraction is felt for a promised reward. God can make a revelation without linking it with a reward. He can reinforce what he says by working miracles. In that case, the piety enlivened is due to the simple pleasure one takes in reflecting on God's truthfulness and the security of faith.

Fourth doubt. What is the source of the attachment to pious credulity and motivation in human deliberativeness, preliminary to the act of faith?¹⁰ A psychological analysis is in order. There is need to determine, in an act of infused faith, the point where grace becomes necessary and to show the exact relationship between the foregoing judgment as to credibility, and the subsequent assent which makes the believer.

¹⁰ Cf. *De Revelatione*, chap. 15, a. 3.

Definition. An act of faith is a deliberate human act elicited by the intellect, imperated by the will, under the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Ghost.

Our present concern is the genesis of that act.

In carrying out any resolution there is a series of acts, a chain of them, concurring with advancing stages in deliberation and in execution. These must be reviewed. They are enumerated and explained in the *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, Questions 8 to 18.

The blind faculty, the will, must always be directed by an act of the intelligence. It approaches its goal in two degrees: the first step is a pure wish within itself; the second is an intention that works out. It is said to be efficacious.

[This sound doctrine explains the quaint maxims: "Think before you act"; "Stop not at idle wishing"; "Be up and doing"; "Will it"; "Faith must be lived."]

In the choice of means for a deliberate end, counsel leads. Next there is succession; the consenting to a row of subordinate means in detail. In every checked decision, the last practical judgment is stamped as preferred for its aptness. Execution follows upon the final decision, which is arrived at in the intellect. Its progress involves the active employment of the means chosen. At the end of the procedure enjoyment or fruition becomes the lot of the will.

Application of the data in tracing the genesis of an act of faith.

1. Acts bearing on man's last end. Analysis of the mental intention. A first judgment begets desire. A second judgment leads to resolution. There are, accordingly, four progressive factors.

First: A judgment is formed to the effect that the last end of man, now known implicitly at least to be a good thing, is definitely desirable.

Second: A desire takes shape for one's salvation, a happiness identified with the last end.

Third: Conviction follows. Salvation is possible and may be earned. This second judgment prescribes: My duty is to know God, to love him above all, to serve him by doing his will [obeying].

Fourth: An intention develops. A resolution is formed. Insofar as it depends on myself, I sincerely determine to work for my last end, which means: My mind is made up to seek my salvation through obedience to God.

Once faith is in possession, the third and fourth factors result from the enlightenment and spurring produced by an interior grace. Without grace the fourth factor is not possible for anybody.

2. The Employment of Means. A) The Order of Election. Four factors, here numbered five to eight.

Fifth factor: Counsel. Consideration leads to a speculative judgment, and then to a mixed speculative and practical one. Reflecting on revelation, proposed and listened to in salutary preaching—to say nothing of the divine signs confirming it, I am gripped with the conclusion: It is credible. More than that, men ought to believe it.

Sixth factor: Consent. I myself will no longer doubt its credibility. Thus far the consent lacks efficacy.

Seventh factor: A practico-practical judgment. From now on there is no way out. I should give credence from this moment.

Eighth factor: Supernatural election, called by the Council of Orange, an affection rooted in one's credulousness. I am ready to believe.

B) Order of Execution. Four factors, numbered nine to twelve.

Ninth factor: Intellectual command, an imperative. Believe!

Tenth factor: Stirring of the will by a pious inclination. My attraction is growing on me.

Eleventh factor: I now believe.

Twelfth factor: Fruition. Enjoyment of security in believing.

Two things must be brought out for a safe view of the acts involved in the above mental processes: 1) There is a difference between factors five and seven; it is a difference between objective credibility and subjective credence. 2) The efficacious intention necessary for an act of faith must be accurately defined and correctly grasped.

1. The chief difference between the judgment of credibility (fifth factor) and the practico-practical judgment of credence (seventh factor) is this. The former exists not only in those who attain to a practicing faith, but also in others who, knowing full well what they are about, commit the sin of infidelity. Such were the Pharisees who, in the presence of miraculous deeds, were positively unwilling to believe in Christ. They charged against him: "Thou dost cast out devils by the power of the prince of devils" (Mt. 9:34; Mk. 3:22).

Our Lord's retort has a doctrinal impact too precious to be omitted here. Jesus answered: "'He who is of God hears the words of God. Therefore, you hear them not, because you are not of God.' The Jews therefore answered and said to him: 'Do not we say well that thou art

a Samaritan and hast a devil?" Jesus answered: 'I have not a devil; but I honor my Father and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory. There is one who seeks and judges. Amen, Amen, I say to you: if any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever.' The Jews therefore said: 'Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest: "'If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death forever.'"' Art thou greater than our father Abraham who is dead?' . . . Jesus said to them: 'Before Abraham was made, I am.' They took up stones, therefore to cast at him" (Jn. 8:47-53, 58-59).

This crucial collision shows that the Pharisees were not blind, either to the evident proofs of credibility or to the general obligation to believe. They knew full well that Christ's teaching was to be accepted by men; yet, through pride they resolved not to yield to it nor to admit the practico-practical judgment impelling toward credence: "This is something I am bound to believe here and now."

As for blasphemy, it is an insult to the Holy Ghost, becoming all the worse when embittered by antagonism to truth one cannot shut one's eyes to, which truth is impugned for the sake of increased freedom in sinning. This is naked impenitence, obstructing future repentance through obstinacy.¹¹ No wonder that our Lord spoke severely: "If I had not performed among them works which no other man has done, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father" (Jn. 15:24).

In the other camp stand the apostles, Zacchaeus and Nicodemus. On beholding that Christ upheld his teaching and supported it by accomplishing miracles, they showed in themselves the roots of good will. Men of good will do not resist the actual advances of prevenient and stimulating grace. They fix their gaze steadfastly on their last end, however vaguely or implicitly they may conceive it. Their mind is made up to qualify for it. They do what lies in them and thereby they attain to the practico-practical judgment of credence: It is here and now my own duty to believe what is proposed. They are awakening, and in due course their credulity develops in order: an affection; a motion of piety; and at last an act of faith with its concomitant security.

Inquiry. Is the practico-practical judgment of obligatory credence supernatural in its substance?

The Thomists hold to the affirmative. It is the immediate regulator of an affective credulousness which is essentially supernatural (so says

¹¹ Cf. below, q. 14, a. 2.

the Council of Orange). It presupposes that my will has already begun to be affected favorably toward things essentially supernatural that are to be believed with the help of an actual grace. On this judgment my conscience is formed to believe in what is proposed by faith, as things not merely credible in themselves and to be vaguely assented to, but as things good and suitable for me to be mastered by, here and now, with a definite resoluteness impelling my will in that direction.

Why should it be claimed that the affectionate leaning toward belief is supernatural in its substance? Because it is desirous of an object that is essentially supernatural. It wants to believe, and, in the form of a desire, it is specified by a supernatural benefit promised to believers, whose attractiveness has already begun to magnetize the will. "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:39).

Objection. The first supernatural judgment of which a man is capable postulates faith beforehand. How can it precede what it postulates?

Reply. A speculative supernatural judgment concerning definite mysteries revealed and believed in postulates the faith? Certainly. But that is not the way with the first practical judgment which one forms with regard to the obligation of believing here and now.

It must be manifest that the judgment bearing on credibility is only a condition *sine qua non*, preliminary to the act of believing, inasmuch as the assent of faith has to be reducible back, materially and extrinsically, to some kind of evidence.

Nevertheless, an act of faith can never be formulated as the conclusion of a syllogism in apologetics. At best an apologetical syllogism terminates in the establishment of a judgment of credibility only. It proceeds in this fashion: Whatever God reveals to men is evidently credible and men should believe it. But to us God has revealed Christian doctrine, as is obvious from the signs confirming it. Therefore, Christian doctrine is evidently credible and should be believed by all.

This reasoning is perfectly human; but a genuine act of faith proceeds on a level infinitely higher, in being essentially supernatural for angels as well as for men.

Objection. A peculiar difficulty touching acts antecedent to the first act of faith concerns the intention of the last end on the part of those who have never heard the Gospel preached before. In such spontaneous and, as it were, instantaneous conversions to the faith after hearing one's first sermon, just what must the supernatural intention be like?

Reply. If the conversions are perfect, if they make souls just, by the

infusion of sanctifying grace, the efficacious intention to qualify for one's supernatural last end derives from the charity that is infused at the moment of justification.

But if the conversions are only partial or imperfect, if they do not extend beyond barely reaching the faith itself, the efficacy of the supernatural intention must at least be coextensive with the truth that has been communicated by God. It is from that intention that supernatural consistency originates the pious spirit of credulity that permeates the consequent elective processes or choices. There can be no supernatural selection of acts and procedures without a previous supernatural intention, for the simple reason that the choice of means always presupposes an intention to reach the corresponding goal.

It has to do with the inquiry: What is required for the salvation of those who have not heard and have never been able to hear the preaching of faith.

Preliminary Data

The Necessity of the Act of Faith for Salvation

The doctrine we now summarize is based on the *Summa theologiae*, IIa, IIae, Question 2, Articles 3 to 8. These six articles support respectively the six branches of the theme to be developed, namely:

- A. Is it necessary for salvation to believe:
 - 1. Anything superior to natural reason?
 - 2. The things which natural reason can find out for itself?
- B. Does salvation require that one's faith be explicit in:
 - 3. Anything whatsoever?
 - 4. All the truths that have been revealed?
 - 5. The Incarnation and Redemption?
 - 6. The Trinity?

Today, controversy is rife on the subject of implicit and explicit faith.¹²

Various Classifications of Things Necessary for Salvation

Distinction between necessity of means and precept: In the matter of what is necessary for salvation, theologians, at least since the Council of Trent, discern that the last end imposes certain requirements, grow-

¹² Cf. P. R. Schultes, O.P., *Fides implicita* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1920).

ing out of its nature, as indispensable means to reach it. They are distinct from other requirements dictated in the form of precepts. The two classes of necessity are named "necessity of means" and "necessity of precept."

Most difficult problems have ensued from a variability in usage of these terms. An examination of them seems suitable, since a key to the problems may be discovered in the correctness of definition employed for both kinds of necessity.

Father Schultes, in treating of implicit faith, holds that the distinction was not any too clear before the Council of Trent. Melchior Cano, Vega, and Bañez have emphasized it, but in a way nowhere found to be expressly proposed by St. Thomas. Furthermore, Father Schultes thinks it more probable that a definition widely received, relative to the inherent means of salvation, falls short of absolute exactness, and that is why many difficulties have sprung forth from its acceptance.

Our procedure will be this. We shall review one definition and its consequent division that has been repeatedly referred to since the Council of Trent. Next, we shall take up the definition offered by Father Schultes. Finally, by comparison with articles which we shall explain from St. Thomas, it will be possible to see what view comes nearest to the truth.

Tanqueray and a respectable number of other theologians define and divide the matters as follows:

1) There is a necessity bearing on the means of salvation to such an extent that, if the said means are nonexistent, even without fault, salvation is unattainable. This absoluteness can be due either to the nature of the thing or to a divine institution. All the saved require habitual grace, for it is the seed of glory in heaven, planted on earth. This necessity is inherent in the very nature of the supernatural order. Adults require merit, over and above.

There is another necessity for salvation: baptism of water or at least of desire. Martyrdom may supplant it, whence its designation as baptism of blood. Baptism is a divine institution. The sacrament binds because it was imposed by our Lord in person on believers. It is indispensable for salvation.

2) Obligatory precepts, not necessarily connected with means inherent in the mystery of salvation, bind believers to some obedience that depends on their voluntary correspondence, once they learn about them after having attained the use of reason. In case a personal obligation of

precept were omitted without fault, salvation would not thereby be hindered. The Easter duty is of this class.

These definitions impress Fr. Schultes as conveying more than is needful. They express not only what applies *per se*, but they add to it a factor that adheres only *per accidens* and at times might be wholly missing. As groundwork, the propositions are not sufficiently speculative. They spring too suddenly toward practice. It is premature to compromise solid doctrine without considering sufficiently the speculative import of its definitions. To assimilate the definitions given would precipitate a huge difficulty.

In the Christian epoch, for instance, Christ having already come, is it true that salvation is beyond the reach of men who, through no fault of their own, have not explicit faith in the Incarnation and the Blessed Trinity? Faith in these mysteries is put down as one of the indispensable necessities for salvation. Father Schultes prefers to formulate what he judges to be more correct doctrine in the sense that follows:

For salvation, some things are necessary as inherent means; others are necessary because they are commanded. This initial distinction employs the same terminology as Tanqueray. But the so-called indispensable means are put down as not always an absolute necessity. Some bind *per se* and always; others *per se*, but not always. Those that are compulsory *per se* and always may derive from the nature of the need, or from the divine institution of the Christian religion. From the nature of the need some are required for everybody, others for adults only. For example: All souls that are saved need habitual grace and the theological virtues. Adults need to believe that "God is" and that "He rewards according to merit." From the institution of the Christian religion there issues baptism of water for infants, with never a substitute, outside of martyrdom. The means that pass as *per se* necessary, although not always, presuppose the possibility of knowing or learning about them, as in the case of baptism of water for adults. *Per accidens*, baptism of desire may compensate for the absence of baptism of water.

Objective precepts cannot be ignored. But they depend on the will of duly constituted authorities. Disobedience to them is a disorder, an evil thing; yet, the measure of the evil need not be the thing done, but the binding force freely intended by the authority commanding or prohibiting.

Examples. To keep holy the Sabbath Day is a Mosaic precept. To sanctify Sunday by hearing Mass and refraining from servile works is a

Christian precept. To observe the sabbatical rest once a week and not merely once a month; to make the Easter duty once a year, rather than every second year—these are precepts which, in binding under pain of mortal sin, cannot be violated without jeopardizing one's salvation.

Means that are *per se* necessary for salvation do not, in the mind of Father Schultes, need the qualification that would make them absolute. They need not be "so necessary that salvation is impossible without them, even though the omission of them cannot be imputed as a fault."

The inculpable omission, he contends, is a circumstance that belongs more logically in a future subdivision, for the matter does not always turn out that way. It happens only with infants not yet capable of desiring baptism. Adults are never inculpably without sanctifying grace, or at least without an implicit desire of being baptized.¹³

The serious import of necessary means is based on their indispensableness *per se*. Food is that kind of a necessity in sustaining life. Fr. Schultes is ready to admit another brand of which he says: It is of itself necessary, provided one has previously acquired available knowledge about it. Take, for instance, the Incarnation after the coming of Christ. One must believe in it explicitly. Faith in the Incarnation is no mere matter of precept. It is a medial necessity, because it is bound up with Christ as universal Mediator. It unites the believer with the Savior, which makes it, of itself, necessary to gain one's last end. It becomes, of itself, the way to salvation.

On this score, the Carmelite School of Salamanca, the Salmanticenses, have apparently shifted.¹⁴ They too present the division proposed by Father Schultes. It looks like a tacit retraction of their former stand, which they often reiterated. Their support is now thrown into the contention that, once the Gospel was promulgated, explicit

¹³ Fr. Schultes propounds his view as a position directly opposite Tanquerey's. To hold for a necessity barring salvation to those who, without personal fault, fail to employ indispensable means inherent in the situation embraces a double confusion. In the first place they offend against logic in bringing together the proximate genus (necessity of means) and a particular subdivision, to the exclusion of its alternative (*per se* and always required, as against *per se*, but not always required). In the second place, they overlook the difference between adults and children. There is always some guilt, even though one's responsibility is remote, on the part of a delinquent adult. Negligence can always be forestalled, because with the help of grace that is always within reach (*auxilio gratiae sibi oblato*), one should do what lies in him, and thereupon God would furnish whatever is always necessary for salvation. It is not right to claim that whatever is *per se* always takes place. *Per se*, man is born with five fingers on each hand, but not always; some men have been born with six fingers and others with only four.

¹⁴ Cf. *Salmanticenses, De Fide*, disp. 6, dub. 1, par. 3, n. 77.

faith in Christ our Lord is *per se* a necessary means of salvation. *Per accidens*, however, it can occur that, notwithstanding the historic advent of Christ, one or another may gain salvation (without knowing of it, and therefore) without explicit faith in the Incarnation. They add: Among Thomists we find supporters in Soto, Ledesma, and Medina. They might have lengthened the series with the names of Javelli and Serra. John of St. Thomas recognized the probability of this thesis. We shall have more to say about it in Article 7.

Article 3¹

Does Salvation Require Faith in Anything That Is Above the Grasp of Natural Reason?

Statement of the question. Why should it? 1) As rationalists hold: For the perfection of anything, those elements suffice which match its nature. 2) There would be a danger of error, owing to the alleged nature of supernatural truths. They cannot be demonstrated. 3) It is enough to keep to St. Paul's statement that God is learned about from creatures: "The invisible things of God . . . are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20).

¹ The readjustment of these articles, to follow Articles 9 and 10, has been explained. Before studying them, it is well to present four groups of authors on whom we shall draw.

1. Those who hold that, after the promulgation of the Gospel, it is more probable that faith must be explicit in Christ and the Trinity. This necessity is a means of salvation binding absolutely on everybody, at least insofar as the power of God's ordinary providence is concerned. Proponents of this view are: John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Billuart, St. Alphonsus, Hugon, Martin. Gonet cites also the Jesuits Molina and Valentia.

2. The necessity grows out of a precept. It is not of the absolutely medial sort. And if the precept escapes one's knowledge, implicit faith in the Trinity and Incarnation will do. Holding to this position are: Richard a Mediavilla, De Lugo, Diana.

3. Explicit faith in Christ is of itself a necessary requirement for salvation, either in itself objectively or through desire. Suárez and Capéran support this opinion.

4. Explicit faith in Christ, *per se*, is a necessary means of salvation. It can happen, however, even now (in Christian times), that odd souls are saved without it. The Dominicans, Javellus, Soto, Ledesma, Medina, and recently, Schultes and Huguency follow this opinion. John of St. Thomas and Gonet concede this to be a probable opinion, without retracting their view that the opinion of the first group is more probable.

5. Báñez and Cano agree that explicit faith in Christ is necessary for eternal glory in every case. It need not, however, be required for justification.

Reply. For man to attain to beatific vision, supernatural faith is a foregoing necessity. St. Thomas emphasizes this. It is commonly added: The necessity has always been regarded as indispensable for everybody, faith being a means of salvation, independently of precepts. In children, faith is present passively, as an infused virtue. In adults the infused virtue must be productive of supernatural acts.

Thomists are unanimous upholders of this position. The rank and file of theologians concur, with Suárez, De Lugo and Hurtado outstanding.

There has been only a handful of theologians denying that adults, possessing infused faith, need to make acts of faith, over and above; but, as we shall see—and the Salmanticenses stand with us²—this opinion is too false to be defended even as probable. It has been stigmatized by a great many as erroneous, not to say heretical. It is utterly at variance with our preliminary definitions.

1. *Proofs from Holy Scripture.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God. Whoever comes to God must believe that he is: and that he is a rewarder to those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). St. Paul, in these words, is dealing with supernatural faith. He had made the perspective clear at the beginning of the same chapter by saying: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for." The things hoped for are supernatural and not apparent. They crystallize in life eternal. Christ's own words are momentous! "Whoever does not believe shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16); "He who does not believe in the name of God's only-begotten Son is already judged" (Jn. 3:18). St. Paul explains to the Ephesians: "By grace you are saved through faith: and that not of yourselves for it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). To the Romans he appeals more argumentatively: "With the heart we believe unto justice . . . 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? . . . Faith, therefore, comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:10, 13-14, 17).

2. *Church Councils* (cf. Denz., Index, p. 597). The Council of Orange conveys equivalently, in its position on the initial wedge of supernatural faith, that faith is the necessary foundation and root of justification. "If anybody says . . . that the beginning of faith and the accompanying attraction in believing, which induces one to believe in him who justifies the wicked . . . is an interior instinct of one's own and not a gift of grace . . . and that it should not be ascribed to the inspiration of the

² Cf. Disp. 6, n. 65.

Holy Spirit in correcting our will by delivering it from infidelity unto faith, from impiety to piety, let him be anathema" (Denz. 178).

From such a pronouncement it follows that, in saving the soul, a passage must be effected from infidelity to supernatural faith, from impious ways to the cultivation of piety, in response to inspiration communicated by the Holy Ghost.

The Council of Trent said that supernatural faith is a requisite in preparing souls to be justified: "The favorable disposition they experience toward righteousness develops from an interior awakening through the influence of divine grace, and a help derived from the hearing of faith. They are freely put in motion toward God by believing truths that have been divinely revealed and promised" (Denz. 798).

This description is supplemented by the council's declaration concerning baptism (cf. Denz. 799). Baptism is a sacrament of faith without which it never happens that anybody is elevated to the state of grace. "In never happening to anybody," the sacramental mystery described must be of exclusive efficacy within definite bounds as a medial operation without ever transgressing the fixed limitations. The operation is consistently the same at all times. It imparts the infused virtue of faith to infants who are not capable of making an act of faith. Adults, through the use of reason, have become capable; and that fact imposes on them the necessity of making an act of faith. To inculcate this duty, the council invokes St. Paul's warning to the Hebrews: "He who comes to God must believe that he is: and is a rewarder to them who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation, the root of all justification. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Denz. 801, citing Heb. 11:6).

The Council of Trent furnishes another proof of the necessity of supernatural faith for justification by insisting on the necessity of penance, or at least of contrition, if mortal sin has been committed. But the contrition has to be supernatural, which would be impossible unless the faith dictating it were also supernatural (cf. Denz. 819, 894, 897, 914).

The First Vatican Council pushes the consequences to their full length, imitating Trent's adherence to the basis in St. Paul (cf. Denz. 1789, 1793; Heb. 11:6): "Since it is impossible to please God without faith" and equally impossible to consort on an equality with God's 'sons,' it never happens to anyone at any time to be justified without faith, nor does anybody attain to everlasting life without persevering in faith to the end."

What then becomes of those who are handicapped by invincible ig-

norance? The universality of the doctrine extends to them also. Hence, the condemnation of professed liberalism under Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX (cf. Denz. 1648, 1677). Lamennais had offended in formulating his own indifferentism in a way that was banned: "Any kind of a profession of faith will do for eternal salvation, if one's morals come up to the standard of rectitude and honesty" (Denz. 1613). Liberalism of this type merely disguised what had been previously condemned as laxism, namely: "In a broad sense, faith, growing out of the testimony of creatures, or any like motive, is enough for salvation" (Denz. 1173).

Of special importance is the pronouncement of Pope Pius IX against indifferentism: "Faith is a direct necessity for salvation" (Denz. 1645). Then touching upon invincible ignorance affecting Christianity, he says: "Outside the Church there is no salvation" (Denz. 1647). "The hand of the Lord is not shortened (Is. 59:1) and the gifts of celestial grace will not by any means be wanting to those who, in sincerity of spirit, desire and entreat to be made over by its light. These and allied truths need to be impressed deeply on the minds of the faithful lest they be corrupted by false teachings which are designed to foster religious indifference and which are wrecking souls far and wide with increasing force before our eyes" (Denz. 1648).

The same Pontiff, Pius IX, declares against the forms of indifferentism and liberalism which deny the obligation to believe. "It is known to you and to ourselves that they who suffer from the handicap of invincible ignorance concerning our most holy religion, and who conscientiously carry out the law of nature with its precepts, which have been engraven by God on the hearts of all men—they who, being disposed to obey God, and show it by leading an honest upright life, can, in virtue of a specially operative divine light and grace, obtain everlasting life, since God . . . will never suffer to have anybody punished with eternal torments who is not guilty of voluntary misdeeds" (Denz. 1677).

But, on the other hand, it is one of the best known among Catholic dogmas that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church; neither can contumacious souls, who rise up against the authority and definitions of the Church, who break loose from Church unity and pertinaciously cut themselves off from the successor to St. Peter, be saved. "Eternal salvation is abandoned by them."³

From this amassing of authorities, we establish that, absolutely speaking, although God has power to save man without the possession of any

³ Cf. also the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX, prop. 15-18 (Denz. 1715-1718).

human knowledge or love on man's part, nevertheless, he is unwilling to do so, and this is conformable to man's human nature.

A divine departure, most exceptional, was the instantaneous enrichment of Christ's own humanity with beatific vision at the moment his soul was created. This marvel was due to the hypostatic union of the personal Word of God with human nature. No interference follows from the sublime occurrence that would undermine the reasoning of Aquinas presented here.

Theological Proof. It is a medial necessity for salvation that man should be aware of his last end, toward which he ought to tend and in view of which he should regulate his conduct, under pain of not acting rationally. But man's last end is supernatural and cannot be known except through revelation and faith. Therefore, there is a medial necessity in working out one's salvation, that man be possessed of supernatural faith, and that his condition be like that of a pupil who first believes what he is taught, up until the time when he sees and understands it. This is one of Aristotle's elementary observations: "A learner must first believe as a step in his approach to evidence."

In the article we have taken up, St. Thomas shows in a wonderful manner how grace perfects nature—it does not destroy it. Quite the contrary, it preserves what nature offers of its noblest. This principle fits into a more general one, governing the subordination of causes. Every inferior cause has a motion of its own, to which is added a superior motion produced by the higher cause. The article deals a deathblow to rationalism.

Objection. But that does not keep Cajetan from pondering. The subordination of causes in the natural order goes back to a general principle which can solve nothing with regard to supernatural motion. But supernatural motion is what we are here interested in. The explanation of St. Thomas collapses.

Reply. It is indeed supernatural motion that is under discussion. But the analogy borrowed from the natural order furnishes valid support for our explanation. In the sensible order, take seawater. It has a double movement. One is its own, sheer gravitation. Another is in the ebb and flow of the tides caused by the moon. Now what is there to prevent something similar on the top of creation; namely, in the human mind? In its own domain, the mind moves independently; but it also receives a supernatural motion from God's special influx which begets a supernatural attraction. What a beautiful analogy; but is it nothing more?

Yes, admits Cajetan, it amounts to a probable argument, "so probable as to compel assent. . . . So great was divine love in our behalf . . . that it communicated through grace what could not have been communicated through nature" (n. VII).

However, there remains something special to disentangle in a point indicated by St. Thomas. "Rational nature, in so far as it grasps the universal import of what is good and whatever is, enjoys a direct relationship with the principle of being."

That does not seem true, since it postulates a leap from the universal predication of what is good into the divine order of goodness, which is buried in the universal concept of being. Nevertheless, granting that our will has immediate contact with God, thanks to the specification it receives from God through infused charity, there remains a melee in the concepts between the order of nature and the order of grace.

Reply. That leap is not to be imputed to St. Thomas. Keep to his words. They hold for angels as well as for men, without transgressing the limits of the natural order. From the fact that man is capable of knowledge in the form of universals, the Angelic Doctor reasons that he has a capacity for universal good, which is in God only (Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 8). In this case the specification of the will is not due to any immediate action of God, such as is necessary for the infusion of charity. It is the effect of universal good, perceived objectively and speculatively, whose power is directive toward God, as nature's author, deserving of greater love than anything in his created works. And nature's author becomes nature's end and nature's mover to that end, for agencies are always subordinated to what their purpose or end requires. God alone, as author of nature, has full control in the movement of nature to its final destiny.

A restricted conclusion follows that is safely within the scope of St. Thomas' meaning. The capacity of our soul for universal good that is nowhere to be found except in God the author of nature, is a very probable sign of obediential potency. It is a sign that man's elevation to the supernatural order of grace has nothing in it that is impossible or unsuitable. Thence follows a congruity in looking to God, through faith, for supernatural enlightenment and the truths which show the way unto beatific vision.

Adults only can profit by this educational mode, for they alone are competent to perform the characteristic acts. Children who die immediately after baptism have no opportunity. The unexercised habit of

faith saves them. It was just the opposite with Christ's soul. By exception, from his origin, Christ possessed the same vision as do the blessed, through the hypostatic union binding his soul with the personal Word of God.

As Cajetan remarks (no. VII), it is patent "how very just it is to exact of rational creatures, belief in supernatural verities and the adjustment of what they do to supernatural norms." If a rational animal is expected to act rationally, then man in virtue of his calling and elevation to a participation in divine nature, has an obligation to act supernaturally; and he must begin by believing supernaturally that this is the only course compatible with his perfection as a sharer in divine nature preparatory to life eternal. More than that: if there is a necessity to believe in the supernatural, it is damning not to believe. And if the necessity is not medially absolute, then there is no alternative left, to supply the seed of glory or to enliven any positive tendency toward supernatural everlasting life.

Article 4

Is There Any Obligation to Hold as Objects of Faith What Can Be Proved by Natural Reason?

Statement of the question. A negative answer would seem justified because the query seems superfluous. Why should one accept on faith what human reason can find out without faith? Furthermore, nobody can, at one and the same time, assent by knowledge and by faith to the same thing. Finally, too many things are so well known—mathematical truths, for instance—that it would be absurd to represent that they need to be believed in.

Aquinas' conclusion. This is a conclusion drawn from the Angelic Doctor's treatment (*ad 2*). It is at least a moral necessity for many men to believe, with regard to God, what human reason can come to the knowledge of by itself.

1. *Teaching of the First Vatican Council* (Denz. 1786). There exists a moral necessity of revelation, for the protection of the body of truths bearing on religion, which are known naturally. A revelation of the kind would certify what is known about divine things, within the range of natural talent. It would endow them with firmness and it would be a

guarantee against any admixture of error. It would make it possible for all to learn religious truths more quickly, notwithstanding the upsetting of humanity in any epoch.

In formulating this doctrine the First Vatican Council drew on the article we are expounding (*Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 4), just as it had previously drawn on Ia, q. 1, a. 1, and *Contra Gentes* (I, chap. 4). Its reason is clear for, as Aquinas expresses it: "That which is an object of science for one can be an object of faith for another" (*Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 4 ad 2).

The Council comprehends the whole body of religious truths in speaking literally of "all those things in divine matters that are not impervious to human reason." This collective pronouncement in the plural does not exclude, nor does it include, the fact that there are certain truths about God for which, taken singly, revelation is not even a moral necessity.¹

God's existence is a truth of this class. The physical order of the universe brings it home to all that nature's God is nature's author. The knowledge is easily gained, albeit at times confusedly. Theologians as a class do not admit that adults who have come to the use of moral reason can remain invincibly ignorant that there is a God who is the author of nature and nature's legislator. Through the principle of causality, human reason can rise from right order of any kind to a supreme regulator. It can see that the fundamental principle of morals—"Do what is right and shun evil"—can have no binding power without a sovereign legislator.² Holy Scripture takes the same stand; this is obvious from the fact that it considers men who are ignorant of God's existence, vain and inexcusable.³

2. *Theological Proof.* It is morally necessary, for many, to believe in the collection of natural truths pertaining to religion, for three reasons: (1) that they may come into possession of that knowledge more readily; (2) that all may possess it; (3) that they may cling to it as truth purified from all error.

The notion that that which is knowledge for one is faith for another, holds good for all preambles to faith. But among the preambles, certain ones are easily grasped by everybody. They are the building blocks, so to speak, that steady souls advancing toward the evidence of credibility. Nobody can doubt: There is a God and he is true.

¹ This is a common theme used in apologetics against traditionalism; see *De Revelatione*, t. I, cap. XIII.

² See Billuart, *De Deo*, diss. I, a. 4.

³ Cf. Wis. 13:1; Ps. 78:6, 8; Rom. 1:21.

Objection. The existence of God as the author of nature needs to be known before one makes an act of faith in God's authority as revealer.

Answer. It is probable that the natural knowledge of God as author of nature is possessed in some way or other beforehand, and that the said knowledge, in this case, is reinforced and strengthened by revelation confirmed by miracles. It is recorded that materialists have been converted on the occasion of diabolical orgies, which proved to them the falseness of materialism and the existence of spirits, whereby they subsequently acquired a conviction of the existence of God.

Article 5

Is There an Obligation to Believe Anything Explicitly?

Statement of the question. A negative answer seems right: 1) Because it is not always within the power of man to believe anything explicitly. It could be, that nothing reaches his ears from the preaching of faith. 2) It seems sufficient for salvation that one keep prepared rightly in mind and spirit. Interior readiness would, of course, involve a desire for explicit faith. 3) Let a man be prompt in spirit to obey or to believe (in general) whatever may be divinely proposed and he will have no need to believe anything explicitly.

Conclusion. Express faith is binding upon every man, to the extent of accepting the Pauline pair of first credibles, without which the duty of supernatural faith cannot be accomplished.¹ The import of this reply is bolstered up by a tradition previously touched upon. It is rooted in the declaration of the Council of Trent that supernatural faith had always been accounted a medial necessity for salvation. It obligates inclusively and exclusively, as is signified by the Council's warning: "Without supernatural faith it never happens that anybody is justified" —nobody can be in the state of grace without it. It binds *de necessitate medii*. It is a medial necessity for salvation to hold to the pair of first credibles, which the Council cites in the inspired words of the Apostle: "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder to them who seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

The authorities assembled in proof of Article 3 have equal force here in Article 5. In both places it must be insisted upon that the root credi-

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5, 8 ad 1; *III Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, 4th ad 1.

bles, as formulated by St. Paul, have direct reference to God as existent and rewarding his seekers in the supernatural order. Of this there can be no doubt in the light of the following reasons.

First of all, the Apostle stresses: One must believe. He does not say: One must know. The entire chapter deals formally with faith in the strict supernatural sense. Its very beginning has the force of an exclusive title: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. 11:1). But those are real things, "nothing short of eternal life." They have been "prepared by God for those who love him"; "No human eye has seen them, no ear has heard them, nor has any human heart been able to soar up to them." Though not appearing, they are supernatural realities (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).

Secondly, Abel, Henoch, Noe, and Abraham, all equally pleased God in desiring a heavenly country, far better than any region on earth, the same as Moses, whose faith in a supernatural land of promise was sealed, as for an apportioned reward (cf. Heb. 11:5, 16, 26).

A theological proof, based on the article in the *Summa*, makes room for the consideration that if faith had no necessary connection with truths that should be known explicitly, it would be voided of its own peculiar formal object.

The medial necessity we are upholding (*de necessitate medii*) is not sustained by St. Thomas under that name. Not until after the Council of Trent did this usage become common. The language of the Angelic Doctor is simpler. He distinguishes between a necessity inherent in the virtue intrinsically and a necessity originating in an extrinsic precept. The phrasing does not at all jar on our proof.

Every adult is bound to employ, as an indispensable means of salvation, acts of the theological virtues, for without them one's last end, which is salvation, lies entirely beyond one's reach. But one cannot perform acts of the theological virtues without having an express supernatural belief in the formal object *quod* of faith, based on the authority of God revealing it. The object *quod* is God himself as author of grace and the promise he makes of future reward as the effect of his personal goodness (see ad 2). Therefore, in every epoch, it was and is inevitably compulsory for adults to use as a medial demand for salvation a real supernatural and clear faith in God as the author of grace and supernatural remunerator, known as such on the authority of divine revelation. Without this disposition there could be no approach to God as one's supernatural goal.

This whole demonstration is built on the principle that habits and virtues derive their species from their formal object. If that principle fails—and it has been denied by nominalists and by Molina and his followers—there would be no substance left in treatises on the virtues, especially those called theological: faith, hope, and charity. For this reason, they who repudiate specification from the formal object, in reading the *Summa* of Aquinas, do not reach its marrow. They are like rodents who feed on bark, to use a figure of Pope Leo XIII, in denouncing rationalists for their way of reading Holy Writ.²

First Conclusion. Supernatural faith cannot exist bereft of its twofold formal object *quod* and *quo*. Its formal object *quod* is Prime Truth in its essence, precisely as towering above natural knowledge and making itself known as God, the author of grace. This, then, is the first credible and it has to be believed in explicitly.

The second credible must be joined to the first: "God is a rewarder." By the very nature of the case St. Thomas articulates: "The instrument by which man gains blessedness belongs *per se* to faith." As we contended in Article 3, so also here, it is a human need for man to believe that God is the supernatural end of the human race, in order that he may regulate his deeds conformably to that end. Success in this direction is always possible with God's help through grace (ad 1).

Second Conclusion. Besides the two prime credibles, other subjects enter into the object *quod* of faith. Outstanding among them is the combined content of Sacred Scripture and apostolic tradition. Complete faith in these two sources must be at least implicit. It binds, to say the least, with the force of precept, according to time and place, when and where the precept becomes known.

Third Conclusion. There is an absolute obligation to love God explicitly above all, as author of grace. There is no forgiveness of sin, no justification, without it. Furthermore, in adults, the merit of charity is a medial requirement of means for salvation.

A doubt. Is it sufficient for salvation that one accept confusedly in a general way whatever the Church believes and teaches, without having any further determined or express personal faith in God?

The response. By no means: ecclesiastical faith must comprise the deliberate acceptance of direct belief in God who is, and in God the rewarder of good and the chastiser of evil. It is impossible for man to pay due homage to God, if God is blacked out beyond the organization

² Encyclical, "*Providentissimus*."

called a "Church." How can man then be accredited with directing his personal deeds to their right end? For a stronger reason, the vague position described is a departure from what the true Church teaches. It is an empty subterfuge.

Three Classes of Objections

Objections leveled against the foregoing tenets of orthodox faith score in three directions. They are chained into three series.

Series 1: Faith is sufficient "*in voto*," as when it develops a desire or preparatory disposition in mind and spirit.

Series 2: A habit without acts is sufficient for faith.

Series 3: There is no need of believing anything beyond the prime credibles, applying their content to God as author of nature.

SERIES I. INSUFFICIENCY OF FAITH "*in voto*."

First Objection. Baptism is a necessity for salvation. And yet, *per accidens*, the desire for baptism suffices. In parallel circumstances what is to prevent a desire for supernatural faith from sufficing? Take the case of one who sincerely finds himself in this predicament. "I fail to gain any certitude about God's existence; but if there is a God may he graciously hear the prayer I offer conditionally, and if he is a savior, may he grant me salvation."

Solution. There is no parity between baptism and faith in the two prime credibles that would weigh against the Thomistic position.

1. Because the desire of baptism is wrapped up in the supernatural belief in God as rewarder and in the conviction, God is to be loved. Faith in an existent God who remunerates is itself the beginning of salvation, the root of justification. It does not presuppose any other supernatural element, such as the mere desire of such faith would require to repose in as a subject. This is Tridentine thought.³

2. Since the rite of baptism is an external thing, its performance can be prevented in many ways—not so, the internal act of faith. That is why Christ provided for baptism of desire, with never a word about faith by desire. It was genuine faith he called for in the denunciation: "He who does not believe shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16a).

3. If faith, as yet sprouting only through desire, were to suffice in

³ Cf. sess. 6, chap. 8; Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, n. 69.

justifying a soul, then, for a stronger reason, charity of desire ought to suffice for the same purpose, since charity presupposes faith and hope. But nobody has ever made the claim. In adults salvation requires the merit accruing from charity as a medial necessity.

4. As for the agnostic who alleges he wants to believe but cannot, let him persist in his hypothetical entreaty: "God grant me salvation if he only exists." Perseverance of the sort would bring him an infusion of the light of faith as signified through the axiom: "Let one do what in him lies, with the help of actual grace, and God will not withhold the ulterior grace which he needs."

Since the opposition may claim support from three objections recognized by St. Thomas, we here dispose of them by placing them in their proper perspective.

First argument: It is not always possible for one to believe a truth explicitly. He may never have heard it preached.

Answer: Since the days of St. Augustine, Catholics have never doubted that, if the contrary has not ensued through one's own fault, there is sure to be a manifestation in the life of every adult of those particular truths in which absolute faith is required, in order to gain salvation. "This divine help, no matter to whom dispensed, is a gift of mercy. Wherever it is not dispensed, the reason is one of justice. It is a penalty for sin, actual or at least original."⁴

This explanatory quotation from St. Augustine is of great importance. It brings out the meaning of what St. Thomas held and expounded using other words; for example, efficacious grace, especially when providing means that are necessary for salvation, is never wanting to anybody who has not blocked it by previous sin. This previous sin does indeed presuppose a divine permission, but the prior permission is quite distinct from the subsequent denial of efficacious grace. The denial is a punishment for standing guilt.

In adults, however, the withholding of the efficacious grace necessary for salvation is because of one's personal guilt. If a grown person would not resist prevenient graces offered by our Lord with sufficiency—"our sufficiency is from God"—God would not deny the efficacious grace that would unfold from that sufficiency, as do fruit and seeds from blossoms.⁵

⁴ *De Correptione et Gratia*, chaps. 5, 6; *Epistola* 90 (alias 157), chap. 3; *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 8, (alias 9).

⁵ Cf. 2 Cor. 3:5; Pius IX (Denz. 1677). Cf. also below, q. 2, a. 7. A probable opinion is this: Faith in Christ should be explicit. It is *per se* necessary for salvation, but not always.

Second argument: Preparedness of soul and spirit is all that is required for many acts of virtue. Why should it not suffice for the virtue of faith?

Answer: Not all virtues are of equal importance. Acts of virtue are of primary and of secondary rank. Primary acts have to do with the primary formal object of the greater virtues in their purity. It is only of certain secondary or derivative acts of faith and charity that the preparedness would be verified. Formal acts of the great virtues brook no substitute.

Hence, every adult is bound, medially and indispensably, to love God determinately above all else as author of grace. Unless he does so he gains no supernatural merit. It is different in the initial acts of faith, hope, and charity. In these is wrapped up, at least implicitly, the desire to perform in due course, should occasions arise, many subordinate supernatural acts that have reference to secondary objects or matters of less importance. If such acts really follow, they smack of tributaries or by-products rather than acts of the head virtues.

Third argument: Acts of faith are reducible to obedience due to God. Promptness of mind and spirit suffices for obedience. Therefore, it should suffice for faith.

Answer: Alertness of this kind will do, at least for natural obedience, but it can never suffice for a supernatural act of faith. Even in natural obedience it falls short, unless its sufficiency is restricted to precepts regulating nothing but secondary matters in the question of obedience. And then its sufficiency is entirely barred from supernatural obedience whose proper and primary object it cannot reach. Natural obedience cannot embrace supernatural factors, however implicit they may appear to be. For a stronger reason, human smartness can never attain to the proper and primary object of faith and love.

As theological habits, these virtues hold a priority over obedience, even when it is supernatural. Their relationships have all to be regulated supernaturally and immediately with reference to the ultimate goal: ["All for God, God first, God alone!"] This is divine archery. Although it is the last thing to be achieved, the ultimate end must be the first thing intended. The arrow is shot only when the target has been chosen and is rightly seen.] Objectively, only in the supernatural field can the ultimate end be discerned and virtues be made to match it.

Objection one. The natural knowledge of what God is, honors him implicitly as man's rewarder. Implicit faith suffices now and then.

Therefore, in line with Lamennais' thinking, common faith or the natural knowledge of God is enough for salvation. Natural knowledge is here confused with common faith on the supposition that this is a common way for people to feel; this received its start in primitive revelation. John de Ripa was confuted by the Salmanticenses for saying something similar.⁶

Reply. The major is false. Supernatural truths are not contained implicitly in natural truths. To be contained implicitly in something else would mean that the container of supernatural truths would have to be a principle superior to, and more universal than, the truths contained; or at least the semblance of containment would demand that container and contained harmonize as belonging to one and the same order. Just as first principles in reasoning are not by any means contained implicitly in the dream-like knowledge of fantasy or the imagination, so also it must be claimed that supernatural truths, which are by nature known to God alone, can never be comprised within the human range of natural truths. These latter are of too low a grade of being.

Objection two. Natural things predicated of God have this singularity. They are on a par with supernatural truths and, like them, they concern the most simple of all realities, the divine. Therefore, they may be said to contain the supernatural, with the same correctness with which any one of God's attributes is said to be any one of the others. It is a matter of mutual compenetration.

Reply. The identification of things in God as the most simple of all realities is true; but the compenetrability or containment of conceptual objects is another thing. The argument is naught, even in God. We submit one of Cajetan's specialties, to bring out the truth that would thus be antagonized.

There is a fundamental distinction that should never be ignored between the formal object *quod*, which is rooted in essence, and the formal object *quo*, which serves as a means of knowledge in reaching the essence. Colors are an object *quod* of sight, whether they are seen or not; but if they are seen, it is due to the effect of an object *quo*, namely, sunlight pouring in upon them. But the formal object *quo*, in human knowing, is different from the formal object *quo* in believing the faith. Furthermore, truth as such is in minds, not in things. Lamennais wings his flight far away from safety in connecting the common persuasions of men in the natural order with primitive revelation. There is no neces-

⁶ Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, n. 70.

sary lineal relationship of the kind that can be established. In the state called "pure nature"—which never has existed—man would have had the use of natural reason independently of revelation.

Objection three. St. Paul preached the following inspired truth: "The Gentiles who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law" (Rom. 2:14). But nothing more is required for salvation than to keep God's law. *Ergo.*

Reply. Authoritative commentators, Sts. Augustine, Fulgentius, and Thomas, would repudiate that construction.⁷ St. Paul's context bolsters up their view. The Law of Moses in written form is what the Gentiles were without; and what they attended to naturally, in accordance with the Mosaic code, showed the grace of Christ at work within them. If St. Paul so described real facts, it could only be he was describing Gentile converts, not unconverted pagans. But converts were antecedently believers in God the rewarder, honored through supernatural faith.

Granting, however, what some would wrongly want us to believe, that St. Paul was writing of Gentiles who were out-and-out infidels and that the integrity he praised in them was purely natural, the result of unaided nature's best in striving—then indeed they were capable of falling in line with Mosaic prescriptions unknowingly, but only in part. It was the whole Law, however, that should have been observed. Fractional conformity to it did not suffice for salvation.

Objection four. But long before Moses, even before Abraham, certain believers were saved—at least, it was not impossible to be saved—and that early period was ruled by the law of nature. Now in the law of nature there were none but natural precepts, and no knowledge of God beyond what nature furnished.

Reply. Concede the major but deny the minor. The "law of nature" as it prevailed in antiquity before Abraham, may never have been described previously in the equivalent of a written form [but who knows?]. It contained, nevertheless, supernatural precepts of faith, hope, and charity, which were inspired into Adam in the beginning and by him were transmitted to posterity. [Altars erected for sacrificial purposes monumentalized the transmission.] It is true that, in recent times, certain Catholic theologians, failing to weigh their error, have proposed that, under the law of nature, there was a time when faith that satisfied for salvation was understood broadly, and had no better foundation

⁷ Cf. St. Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, chap. 27; Fulgentius, *De Incarnatione*, Ep. 17; *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 4 ad 1.

than the natural knowledge of God gleaned from creatures. People of this period had what modernists call a natural religious instinct.

But those theologians retracted their frivolous opinion as soon as they could, in the reaction against modernism inaugurated by the papal Encyclical *Pascendi*. Whether or not they had been taken unawares, their position was contrary to the stern pronouncement of the Council of Trent (sess. 6, chap. 7) which we have introduced above. Faith, to be faith, is such that "without it, it never happens that anybody is justified." The sweeping statements are doubly universal, covering as they do all men at all times. They deal with an unexceptionable medial necessity. Had not St. Paul emphasized exclusively: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6)? The teaching bears directly on faith that is divine.

Scriptural exegetes, therefore, in expatiating over the populations in Genesis who antedated Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, argue very incautiously if they deny that supernatural knowledge of God was available in that epoch. It is Catholic doctrine that even then, when nature's law gave only its name to the period, salvation was possible; yet possible it could not have been, save through supernatural faith in "God who is" and "who rewards" supernaturally. There can be no reliable interpretation of Scripture that is not consistent with the analogy of faith. In the present instance, faith bars any exposition that would contradict even virtually the basic norm of the prime credibles [in Hebrews 11:6].

Objection five. Billuart says that Socrates was saved. But Socrates lived only a rational life. He was quoting St. Justin.⁸

Reply. If Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle were saved, it could only be the result of God's mercy bestowed upon them by the infusion of supernatural faith before they died. But their salvation has not been revealed in a manner that can be certified as infallible; indeed, doubts about it are too well founded to be ignored. Briefly, there was an admixture of vices in their moral virtues and they were often spurred on, in the cultivation of virtues, by vain glory.

Objection six. In the Acts of the Apostles, Cornelius is represented as a just man before he received the faith (Acts 10:2, 30-31, 35). For this reason Peter was sent to instruct him in the faith. This proves that one can be justified without faith.

Reply. Aquinas clearly denies that Cornelius was an infidel. If he had been, his prayer would not have entitled him to favor before God.

⁸ Cf. St. Justin, *Apologia*, chap. 28.

"Without faith nobody can please God."⁹ Cornelius really possessed implicit faith, as did good Hebrews before the Gospel reached them. Peter was dispatched to him, though a Gentile, to instruct him more fully in the "gift of God" which he already had.

SERIES II. OBJECTIONS BASED ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF INFUSED FAITH FOR SALVATION, AS A HABIT, INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY ACT.¹⁰

Certain theologians with nominal leanings are here involved. Hurtado and Castillo have said: "Many adults can be saved because of the mere possession of the virtue of infused faith without the need of making a personal act of faith." The case is this. When baptism has been received in infancy, by one who grows beyond the awakening use of reason and soon dies without exercising the faith by any conscious act and without having committed a mortal sin, his salvation is secure. Nothing short of mortal sin can rob him of the baptismal grace. Nothing further can be deduced from the ruling of the councils.

First Reply. Granting the particular case with its accessory conclusion, there is nothing in it to undermine the following principle laid down by the Council of Trent in its exposition of justification. "The act of faith is requisite for all adults who were not placed in the state of grace before reaching the moral use of reason."

Second Reply. In itself the antecedent is false, in virtue of the universal necessity for every man attaining to the use of reason to turn toward God as toward his last end. This is done by loving God above all else.¹¹ It implies voluntary conversion. Its mere omission deprives one of baptismal grace. [One's first responsible act is, therefore, either a mortal sin or an act of virtue.]

Let one do his duty and what follows? A degree of interior enlightenment is accorded by God, which advances the soul into supernatural conversion over which faith presides directive. This is how it happens that no adult can be saved without exercising the infused habit of faith, if it is in him.

By an adult should be understood one whose maturity is in reason, not necessarily in years. If a baptized subject turns out to be demented or an idiot, his salvation remains secure, the same as for an infant.

The Salmanticenses are in agreement with us, as may be seen from

⁹ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3; cf. Heb. 11:6.

¹⁰ Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, dub. 1, n. 67.

¹¹ Cf. the author's detailed treatment of this universal need in his commentary on the *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6.

what we here condense of our commentary on the Ia IIae, Question 89, Article 6. With Aquinas one must hold that, of those who come to the use of moral reason, God bestows upon one and all, supernatural aids that are at least remotely sufficient for believing. Yet if the recipient declines to use them, if he neglects them, by holding off and not doing what lies within the range of his personal effort, he sins mortally. One who, on the contrary, does not resist these initial advances on God's part, but profits by this offering of grace according to his ability, is bound to receive an increase of enlightenment and further help that will mature in the act of faith which is requisite to complete conversion.¹²

Objection one. Faith is not the same thing as the first grace. That official denunciation was leveled against Quesnell (cf. Denz. 1377). Indeed, many supernatural acts precede the act of infused faith, properly so called. Their purpose is to stimulate a pious credulousness in one's affection. Sometimes these experiences lead to salvation, because of their sufficiency. They are really faith begun, lodged in one's desire implicitly, and inclining one properly, before there has been any clear, express preachment of faith in the form of a proposition.

Reply. We borrow our answer from the Carmelites of Salamanca (*De Gratia*, n. 71). Such alleged supernatural acts, going before the assent of faith, may be sterile and linked with dissent, or an indisposition that shackles the assent of faith. In that case they do not suffice for salvation. If they are not sterile and the act of faith follows upon them, they still suffice only part way. The act of faith regulates supernatural conversion but not properly without fitting into a superior act of charity or God-love. All that precedes the act of faith terminates by merely making it possible for the soul to enter into God as revealer. It does not accomplish the inherence thus prepared for. Let one do what he can and God will not fail to give his grace. It is an easy matter for God to manifest the prime credibles, for they are ingrained in religious traditions which have streamed forth in many varieties from primitive revelation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that theologians hold commonly to the need on the part of all adults to exercise personal effort in producing deliberately the proper and formal assent of theological faith, under penalty of missing salvation. Thomists support the doctrine unanimously, together with Suárez, Valentia, De Lugo, and theologians as a class. The Salmanticenses record that some go so far as to condemn the

¹² Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, and cf. the author's n. 67; *De Gratia* (1946), pp. 272-75.

contrary doctrine as heretical, erroneous, or temerarious. In face of such widespread staunchness the opposing view smacks too much of falsity to be defended as probable.

SERIES III. APOSTOLIC FAITH BINDS ONLY
TO THE BELIEF THAT GOD IS.

Statement. Since philosophers prove the existence of God from reason—he is the author of nature—it follows that the certitude of faith arises from the fact that God has revealed the truth of what philosophy demonstrates. The acceptance of the philosophical truth on divine authority is what suffices for salvation. This doctrine is defended by Suárez, Hurtado, De Lugo, and their followers.

Responses. Our solutions of the foregoing objection are the same as those furnished by Salmanticenses with whom we agree (cf. *De Gratia*, n. 73).

1. It cannot be. The goal of faith is salvation. The assent of faith must be ordained to that supernatural goal. This necessity is such that the formal object, which is the term of assent, must include implicitly all revealed articles of faith whatever. This is what Aquinas accentuates (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 7). But the existence of God as nature's originator has no necessary connection with revealed mysteries. Besides, there is no provision in this nature slant for the indispensable formal object *quod* of faith, without which there is no need of revelation, much less of infusion.

2. The existence of God is inseparable from faith in him as rewarder. But St. Paul multiplies examples (all through Heb., chap. 11) that prove he is speaking of God as author of grace. In the condemnation of Pelagius, the Apostle's sense was referred to God as the author of salvation, which is impossible without grace.

3. The assent of faith which, from every angle, is necessary for salvation, is required of every believer. But many a believer is incapacitated for an assent of this kind, relative to the existence of God as the author of nature. This truth is too clear, too evident to them. They hold with St. Thomas that one and the same truth cannot be formally known and believed by the same person at the same time. It cannot be simultaneously seen and not seen.

4. Supernatural revelation is not accorded for its own sake. Its purpose is to manifest truth of its own supernatural order. Theological

faith, being about God, must therefore assent to God as author of the supernatural order.

Solutions. Our capital conclusion gains force from the dissolution of the three series of objections. The position of St. Thomas is thrown into great relief. The pair of prime credibles—God is, and he rewards “those who approach him”—must be explicitly believed. Faith in them was “always necessary for everybody.” But, Aquinas adds, the necessity does not make them “sufficient for everybody at all times.”¹³

The terminology employed here by the Angelic Doctor invites a comment on theological usage that has gained momentum since the Council of Trent.

Definition. What has been consistently rendered above and elsewhere as “medial necessity” is the concept expressed in the Latin phrase *de necessitate medii*. St. Thomas does not employ that wording, but he surpasses its expressiveness by simplifying. Let tyros judge. With definite modifications he insists that explicit faith is “necessary for everybody all the time”—“*quoad omnes necessarium omni tempore*”: 1) He is speaking of a necessity that bars every exception for adults, past, present, and future. 2) The prime credibles, of themselves, belong necessarily to the proper object of faith, hope, and charity. Without explicit faith in them, the very essence of infused faith, hope, and charity vanishes. Merit, too, vanishes, for the meritorious trend toward the ultimate supernatural end ceases. This supernatural trend is by all means necessary for every adult, because it is a medial necessity for salvation. Both prime credibles must be believed in expressly. It is not enough to hold with explicit faith that there is a living God and after that believe implicitly that he is a rewarder. Subtle skepticism of such a kind would obliterate hope by discarding its only supernatural basis. Supernatural hope must tend expressly toward God himself as a future possession. Without being explicit it could not be real.

Article 6

Is It Equally Binding Upon All to Have Explicit Faith?

Statement of the question. An affirmative answer seems correct because: 1) Salvation makes it imperative to explain the truths of faith.

¹³ Cf. Billot, *De Virtutibus Infusis* (1905), p. 331.

2) Even the untutored are expected at times to account for the least important articles of faith. 3) If explicit faith is not necessary for everybody, what happens? Uneducated rustics and minors could have nothing but implicit faith in their elders, in bishops, or in theologians. That would be incongruous because teachers can err. It is, therefore, necessary for salvation that all alike be equipped with explicit faith.

Conclusion. Superiors and those who are under an obligation to instruct others are obliged to believe more explicitly and to be better and more fully trained, because of their charge. This is the teaching of St. Gregory (*II Morals*, chap. 17).

Theological Proof. The authentic explanation of truths that have to be accepted through faith is reducible to divine revelation, high above the order of reason. But divine revelation is communicated to inferiors through superiors, to men through angels, to minors through adults. Dionysius shows this to be the right order in the "Heavenly Hierarchy."

It follows that among men, as among angels, they who are charged with the training of others should excel them in the explicitness of their beliefs. They should have a fuller knowledge of revealed truths. Higher spirits enlighten lower ones; the same order should prevail among men. Enlightenment must be real, a participation in something more abundant in its source. The arguments will be answered as numbered.

A danger of the kind grows out of the ignorance into which priests lapse when they get engrossed in "practical" things exclusively. Literary instructors of youth float into ways of talking that might be labelled Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian, ignoring as they do ecclesiastical prescriptions and prohibitions supported traditionally, and fulminated expressly by the Councils of Orange, of Trent, and the First Vatican Council.

Argument 1: Responsible elders and superiors jeopardize their salvation by neglecting to advance beyond their charges in explicit acquaintanceship with the truths of faith. They sin against the duties of their state. They inflict injury on their subjects. Rustics occupying episcopal sees or figuring as theologians are an illustration. [History offers examples whenever Church and state are arbitrarily fused together by persecutors.—Tr.]

It is certain that human reason can prove the existence of God, or at least know of it "from the things that God has made" (Rom. 1:20). Some priests, imbued with Kantism, hold to the contrary and sometimes teach it. Perhaps they have never devoted their attention to the directives of the First Vatican Council. Restraint has been exercised since the oath

against modernism was introduced. That it is restraint shows the utility of the oath.

Argument 2: Simple souls are not to be investigated about the subtleties of faith, unless a well-grounded suspicion arises that they have been depraved by heretics. But even if they have been seduced, and actually err, without being self-willed therein, they do not deserve to be stigmatized as guilty of heresy and liable to its punishments. Such is Cajetan's judgment in their favor.

Argument 3: Minors cannot be said to have implicit supernatural faith in their elders, unless, to begin with, the elders have supernatural faith in doctrine that is divine. "Human knowledge is not the rule of faith. Divine truth is." Aquinas here states that individual bishops and doctors can go astray in the faith, without detriment to the sturdiness of the universal Church in its infallibility. "Peter" and the "Church universal" are convertible synonyms for St. Thomas. Cajetan explains why: It is because the faith of St. Peter in person and in St. Peter's successors is the same faith by which the Church as a whole is bound. There is no doubt possible in any issue that may arise over personal historic defections. It is succession in the sovereign pontificate that identifies the transmission of infallibility. This tenet of faith is definitive. It must be believed—and is.

Christ never has permitted and never will permit the chief occupant of the Holy See to err in the faith (*ex cathedra*). This is not a mere personal prerogative. It is for the benefit of the universal Church whose government has been divinely organized for the guidance of souls in true faith. The words of institution are unmistakable. Christ declared to Peter: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. . . . Confirm thy brethren" (Lk. 22:32).

Consistently with this promise and command of the Church's divine Founder, the First Vatican Council has clarified what results in Church life (cf. Denz. 1792 ff.). Holy Church exercises its infallibility not only in solemn judgments but in its ordinary universal magistracy. At an earlier date (in the first half of the eighteenth century) the stand had been exemplified against Quesnel to this effect. The Church cannot neglect the truth; nor can it impugn the truth. Neither can it tolerate the obscuring of the graver truths of faith and morals. It is equally impossible for the Church to inaugurate injurious discipline (cf. Denz. 1449 ff., 1578).

A doubt. Ought teachers to acquiesce in the judgment of the Church

before definitions are pronounced? Does not an obsequious silence suffice?

Jansenists maintained the sufficiency of obsequious silence in face of dogmatic facts, and were condemned by Clement XI (cf. Denz. 1350). Semirationalists, in their turn, occasioned a declaration of Pope Pius IX warning Catholic instructors and writers that it is not enough for them to submit to those dogmas only, that had been expressly defined by the Church (cf. Denz. 1683). The First Vatican Council amplifies: "The faithful and especially they who are engaged in the office of teaching, ought to ward off errors and eliminate them. Their duty is to radiate light of the purest faith" (Denz. 1722).

These denunciations and regulations were called for because, apart from the solemn judiciary power exercised by the Church, her ordinary, universal magistracy demands to be defended. Forth from this source issue not only the condemnation of heretical propositions, but also that of numerous others as infallibly erroneous or temerarious.

A doubt. Must a theologian believe explicitly whatever appears to him to be revealed in Holy Scripture, previous to any known solemn judgment on the part of the Church and before any matter of the kind has found its way into the code of ordinary universal magistracy?

A pertinent example might be the perplexity of a Thomist who is convinced that grace is intrinsically efficacious. Can he claim divine faith for holding that his conviction, which knows no fear of the contradictory denial being true, is equivalently revealed in the following inspired passages of the Bible? "It is God who works in us, both to will and to do, according to his will" (Phil. 2:13); "Who distinguishes thee? What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7); "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. Withersoever he will, he shall turn it" (Prov. 21:1).

The Salmanticenses seem to admit the affirmative.¹ Divine faith is involved, so they claim, in the premises; a theologian can consent to his conviction through the habit of faith, as based upon inspired texts. An assent of the kind is lawful for any conclusion engendered by premises, both of which spring from the faith; for this would run its specification back to a revelation.

This reasoning is a discussion of form, not matter. We suppose it is manifestly lawful and not spoiled by any fear of erring. Our position is this. *In se* a theologian can yield to the proposition advanced, favor-

¹ Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Fide*, nn. 123, 127, 131.

ing equivalent revelation, through theological faith. He may believe in its validity, as a theological conclusion. The conclusion may be put down as faith, since the literal sense of the passages of Scripture is clear. But until the Church would formulate a proposition officially, the theological faith could not be classified as "Catholic."

Practically speaking, the inquiry under discussion affects a case that is rare. It is not common or easy for the evidence of equivalence to be free from all difficulties and in no wise open to doubt. It is very possible that great theologians like St. Thomas could discern with certainty numerous verities equivalently revealed, thanks to the vigor of their intuitive genius, the greatness of their faith, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Should there be a controversy over any particular truth conveyed without a solemn pronouncement by the ordinary universal magistracy of the Church, the faithful should hold to two points: 1) They should adhere to the infallibility of the ordinary universal magistracy of the Church: *Ecclesia credens et docens*. 2) They should retain reverently the historical fact, namely, that the truth in question is taught by the said ordinary magistracy. This is a more precise way of speaking than by referring to "ecclesiastical faith." The theological virtue of faith is identified with a special habit, whose formal constituent would be missing if there were allegedly such another species as "ecclesiastical faith."

Article 7

Is It Necessary for Salvation That All Who Attain Thereto, Should Believe Explicitly in the Incarnation?

Statement of the question. Doctors are divided. On the negative side some reason thus: 1) There have been too many denials in the past, several doctors of repute going so far as to say that the Incarnation might even have been concealed from the angels while they were on probation. 2) The mystery seems not to have been known explicitly by St. John the Baptist, the Precursor. Otherwise, why should he have dispatched inquirers to find out from Christ: "Art thou he who is to come or look we for another?" (Mat. 11:3). 3) Dionysius taught that many were saved by the ministry of angels, as though they had not known Christ.²

² Cf. Dionysius, *Coelestis Hierarchia*, chap. 9.

Affirmative defense. St. Augustine here leads. "That is solid faith which holds that no man, young or old, is delivered from the contagion of death and the bondage of sin except through one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ."³ No better commentary could be desired on the asseveration of St. Paul to the Romans: "The justice of God by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them who believe in him: for there is no distinction. All have sinned and need the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:22-24). "How shall men call upon him in whom they have not believed?" (Rom. 10:14).

Augustine cannot doubt, it is Truth itself that speaks: "Nobody can escape the damnation sprung from Adam except through the faith of Christ" (Gal. 2:16). From the racial damnation they will not be cleared who allege: "We never heard the Gospel." Faith comes by hearing. And how futile are the chances of escape for those who complain: "We did not receive the gift of perseverance."

For St. Augustine there is no salvation except through "the faith of Christ." "Aside from the faith which is in Christ Jesus, either before the Incarnation or afterwards, no one has found reconciliation with God."⁴

If that is true, how is salvation possible for those so placed that they could not know of Christ?

A great many Fathers of the Church spoke the same way. Since they gained their convictions from Holy Scripture, we shall refer to them when citing inspired passages, in their place.

Thesis. To solve the problem we have presented distinctions are needed. In the first place, faith in the Incarnation may be either implicit or explicit. To believe a thing explicitly is to believe what its literal description signifies; thus, by Incarnation is meant, "the Word was made flesh." To believe a thing implicitly is to believe something else explicitly in which it is contained. The container may be a universal principle or a figure. In this sense, the Incarnation would be folded up, for implicit belief without any revealing concept of itself is the grand principle of God's providence in saving and remunerating; or it could be implied in accepted figures or types, through which it could be transmitted as an authentic secret of God. Ancient belief in the kingship, priesthood, and sacrifice of the Messiah was promoted by many types and figures.

Secondly, diverse periods of time also enter into the solution:

³ St. Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia*, PL 44:923.

⁴ St. Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia*, II, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10; *Enarratio in Ps. 104:10*.

1) Original innocence precedes. 2) Next comes the pre-Christian era of the patriarchs and prophets, especially Abraham and Moses. 3) Lastly, the Christian era appears. It is divided from the others by the preaching of the Gospel.

On this background Aquinas offers four conclusions.

First conclusion. In every period some kind of faith in the Incarnation has been necessary for salvation. Post-Tridentine theology commonly subjoins: It is a medial necessity; that is, one actually inherent in the content of revelation without the need of a special precept.

Scriptural Proof. St. Thomas cites the words used by St. Peter in extolling Christ. "He became the cornerstone. . . . There is salvation in no other" (Acts 4:11-12). The negative sentence makes the proposition universal. The belief in Christ's redemption is compulsory for everybody at all times. St. Paul agrees: "Man is not and never was justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ. We [Christians] also believe in him" (Gal. 2:16). It follows from this twofold teaching of Sts. Peter and Paul, that faith in Christ's redemption—real faith of some kind or other—not less than redemption itself, was necessary for all men in every historic period. The benefit of redemption had always to be applied; but without faith it would not be accepted.

"The justice of God is, by faith in Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them who believe in him. There is no distinction, for all have sinned, all have need of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Him has God proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:22-25). This whole chapter in St. Paul is devoted to showing that in every epoch Jews and pagans alike require to be redeemed through faith in Christ Jesus.

Chapter Four of the Epistle to the Romans exemplifies the mystery. Abraham and all just men under the Old Law derived their justice, not from circumcision, not from any of the works peculiar to the Mosaic law, but from faith. The all-important faith was in a promised Redeemer, conceived at least implicitly.

Elsewhere St. Paul goes back to the protoparent. He juxtaposes Adam and Christ (cf. Rom. 5:12, 14, 18, 21) to depict a racial situation: "As by the offense of one man condemnation extended to all men, so by the justice of one man, the justification of life is made possible for all" (Rom. 5:18). Justification of life was identified with the "faith of Christ." There is no denying it. Some degree of faith in Christ, however implicit, has been necessary in all historical periods. Gentiles needed to invoke or

entreat God for their salvation. But how could they without hearing the Gospel? Therefore, argued Paul, the preaching of the Gospel is a necessity throughout the world (cf. Rom. 10:12, 14).

The universality of redemption engaged St. John (1 Jn. 2:2): Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world." "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn. 3:23).

The promulgation of the Gospel and its acceptance are protected by divine sanctions. "Go into the whole world. Preach the Gospel to every creature. . . . Whoever believes not, shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). "He who believes in him, the only-begotten Son of God, is not judged. But he who believes not is already judged" (Jn. 3:18). "You believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn. 14:1). "This is eternal life," prayed Jesus, "that they may know thee, eternal Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3).

The life of grace, the seed of glory, is life eternal. Faith is the substance of its invisible objects, for which we hope. And, as Cajetan observes, the principal things we believe in here below are what we hope to behold clearly in heaven.

Reviewing the above scriptural passages, St. Augustine deduced that the just men of antiquity must have had the faith of Christ in some form or degree. Commenting on St. Paul's identification of the "spirit of faith" possessed by his converts, with that of ancient prophets, he says: "Paul would not have claimed that the spirit of apostolic faith was the same as that of just men in more remote times (cf. 2 Cor. 4:13), unless the generations compared were both seasoned with faith in Christ's Incarnation." It was as if St. Augustine were declaring: "There is no salvation for us without faith in the Incarnation. But lineally our faith is the same that was fostered by the ancients before the Gospel Law was promulgated. That could not be, unless, in antiquity, some kind of faith in Christ had been transmitted."

Theological proof. St. Thomas formulates it. Speaking properly and *per se*, the object of faith embraces whatever serves man as a means in qualifying for eternal blessedness. But the way for men tending toward beatitude is through the combined mystery of the Incarnation and Christ's Passion. Therefore, at all times and among all men, the mystery of Christ's Incarnation had to be believed in somehow.

The minor is St. Peter's express teaching: Salvation is not otherwise possible "for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The major is based on the fact that, *per se*, faith is conferred as an instrument for the attainment of man's supernatural end. The same supernatural end is the goal of hope and charity. Therefore, whatever means are indispensable for salvation belong *per se* to the object of faith. This being true, men have been obliged all through history to believe in Christ some way or other, since he is unchangeably "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6).

Christ the Universal Savior

Because of the tremendous importance of this providence, a digression seems desirable to bring out the full import of the apostolic announcement: "No other name under heaven is given to men whereby we may be saved" (Acts 4:12).⁵

It is the principle that made Aquinas pause in weighing available explanations concerning the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin at the beginning. It is the principle that kept alive the controversy relative to the Immaculate Conception. It was a difficult matter to reconcile the dogma, since defined, with the universality of redemption infallibly revealed; chiefly because too many of its promoters entertained notions which would represent Mary's conception as without stain, independently of Christ's future merits. The situation was to be feared. The opposition of St. Thomas went no further than the conviction which is as true now, as it was then: "It is incongruous to admit any explanation that would postulate a denial of the apostolic doctrine, that Christ is the Savior of all men" (1 Tm. 4:10).

The Church's definition leaves the universality of redemption through Christ unharmed. It canonizes the piety which led Scotus to claim the sound propriety there was in having the "most perfect Redeemer" exercise the "most perfect redemption" in favor of that person who was to be the "most closely united to himself" in effecting the salvation for the human race. The person was his Mother. But redemption is "most perfect, not in repairing but in preserving." The Immaculate Conception was a prerogative of preservation, most befitting the Mother of God.

Reverence for the outcome does not diminish the impact of the principle: "Christ is universally the Savior of all men" [Mary included.—Tr.].

Just as Aristotle and the great philosophers were most alert in all matters touching the primary principles of noncontradiction and causality, so also the great Doctors of the Church were most keen in their dis-

⁵ The digression passes as a footnote in the original text.—Tr.

cernment of the first principles of faith about the Godhead and the salvation of the human race. It stands to reason, however, that the derivation of conclusions from first principles, touching secondary or remote matters, may often be only probable. Nevertheless, it is a precious truth to know wherein the greater minds like Augustine and Aquinas perceived probability to be superior for one side of a controversy, more than the other. Masterfulness has that characteristic. In the fourth conclusion of this series St. Thomas gives an illustration.

The designation of faith in Christ-Redeemer, as varying more or less, in some form or degree, in different historic periods and persons, invites a more definite presentation of particular subordinate conclusions from St. Thomas.

Second conclusion. In the state of original innocence, before Adam sinned, his faith was explicit in the Incarnation of Christ, and was ordained to the consummation of glory. Not knowing beforehand, however, that he would fall, the protoparent did not know that the Incarnation would have to do with deliverance from sin.

The basis of this conclusion is Adam's prophecy related in Genesis: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore, a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gn. 2:23-24). St. Paul explained to the Ephesians what Adam's prophecy signifies: "He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh. On the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it as Christ does the Church. We are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones. That is why a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. And they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Eph. 5:28-33).

The union of husband and wife is a figure of the union between Christ and his Church, concerning which St. Thomas declares: "It is incredible that the first of all men should not have known it." The first man was endowed with wisdom and the gift of prophecy by his Maker, that he might be competent to pass on instruction to the human family as a whole. How strange it would have been for him to have missed this prophetic type in spite of the prophetic light that was accorded him. The sublimity of the mystery is communicated by St. Jerome resplendently, when dwelling upon Ephesians (5:29). "Christ left God his Father and heavenly Jerusalem to come into the world for the sake of espousing the Church to himself." As we shall show later, Adam and the

prophets shared some kind of a preview of this grand mystery, due to their prophetic light.

Quite suddenly, as one might say, after the calamity of original sin, the promise of redemption was promulgated. Genesis records God's words. They were addressed to the demon that had disguised himself as a serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gn. 3:15). Tradition is unanimous in basing the promise of redemption on this text.

Third conclusion. Until the Gospel was sufficiently promulgated, implicit faith in the Incarnation and redemption commonly sufficed. This would consist of belief in the forms through which the Old Law prefigured the Incarnation, taken in conjunction with belief in God as supernatural rewarder.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul is a most vigorous witness. "Before the faith [of Christ] came, we were kept under the law, shut up, unto that faith which was to be revealed" (Gal. 3:23). It was the same as saying: Before explicit faith had begun we were kept shut up, in faith that was implicit. "The mystery that has been hidden from ages and generations, is now manifested to his saints" (Col. 1:26). "All these things happened to them [the Israelites in the desert] in figure" (1 Cor. 10:11). "You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). Sts. Augustine, Chrysostom, Bernard, and other Fathers agree with the view presented here.⁶

Authority of Aquinas. Revelation concerning Christ was patent to many among the Gentiles; for example: "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Jb. 19:25); the sibyl is accredited by St. Augustine with having foretold certain things about Christ;⁷ Virgil announced similar items; Plato spoke of some promised redeemer whom he called "Son of the Idea of the Good."⁸

If perchance any were saved without the guidance of a revelation, St. Thomas holds that they were not saved without faith in a mediator. The faith need not have been explicit, but it had to be implicit; it had to be enclosed, so to speak, in belief based on divine providence. It would assume this form: "I believe in God as a deliverer of men who carries out his own free designs"—this is the object believed. "There are wise men skilled in truth who have received this knowledge from a

⁶ Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, Bk. XIX, and Ep. 89; St. Chrysostom, *Hom. 37 in Matt*; St. Bernard, *Ep. 77*.

⁷ Cf. St. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, Bk. XIII, chap. 15.

⁸ Cf. Plato, *De Republica*, Bk. II.

Spirit." Herein is the formal motive of faith. St. Thomas traces the necessary motive as expressed in the praise of Job: "He teaches us more than the beasts of the earth and instructs us more . . ." (Jb. 35:11). Job's abode was among Gentiles; yet he seems to have gained from revelation his faith in a promised redeemer. His declaration is to the point: "I know that my Redeemer [*goel*] lives" (19:25). The thought of St. Thomas is favorable.

To grasp correctly this third conclusion, it is to be noted that, commonly, implicit belief in a mediator was sufficient, as among minors and the rank and file of ordinary people. Among the higher classes, the prophets and the priests of the Old Law, it seems they would be bound by a necessity, either medial or imposed by precept, to be better trained and possessed of a more express faith in Christ the Redeemer. The sacrifices they offered prefigured Christ's own, and the prophecies they read publicly and sometimes explained, bore on the future coming of Christ. In this perspective the distinction of St. Thomas is intelligible: "After the fall and up to the coming of Christ, elders possessed faith in the Redeemer expressly, minors implicitly."⁹

Supplementary Reasonings. In his discourses on universal history Bossuet submits the following.¹⁰ Socrates, the "wisest of philosophers," knew that the most virtuous of all men would be one, the very excellence of whose virtue would make him an occasion of the blackest envy; a man who, because of his virtuousness, would be doomed "to suffer all injuries and be crucified." Is it incongruous to hold that God placed this most noble idea of virtue in a philosopher's mind for the sake of verifying it afterwards in the person of his Son?¹¹

Applying his keen insight to the sacrifices of the Old Law which prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, Aquinas held that the more eminent Israelites understood the meaning of the sacrifices better than the common folk. These latter had only a veiled knowledge, believing, as they did, that the program of sacrificial worship was divinely disposed, preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. The nearer they lived to the coming of Christ, the more distinctly they grasped the mutual bearing between the mysteries of Christ and the representative character of the traditional, sacrificial worship.¹²

⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas, in *IV Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2 ad 2.

¹⁰ Bossuet, *Discours sur l'Histoire universelle*, II, chap. 19, citing Plato, *De Republica*, Bk. II.

¹¹ Cf. *De Revelatione*, II, p. 219.

¹² These closing paragraphs are incorporated from footnotes in the original.—Tr.

It is more probable that the more or less imperfect, explicit faith in redemption, on the part of the Masters in Hebrew times and circles, was a medial necessity for salvation, inasmuch as the Redeemer's role itself was not left to contingent hazards. It was decreed indefectibly, and not merely foretold as a religious event that would take place before a certain date or not at all. This is an important indication which must not be sidetracked in the more difficult issue that confronts us next.

Fourth conclusion. "Under the Gospel dispensation, following the revelation of revealed grace, all believers, high and low, are obliged to have and to exercise explicit faith in the mysteries of Christ, particularly in those that are publicly proclaimed or commonly solemnized in the Church; namely, the Incarnation and Redemption." This doctrine of St. Thomas raises a many-sided question which has evoked a variety of answers (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7).

Explicit Faith in Christ the Savior

Is explicit faith in Christ the Savior absolutely necessary for all as a means of salvation? This question is by no means of slight account. Missionaries especially have need of its right solution. Expositors get disputatious over it, whether they rank high in apologetics or in specialized theology. What has been revealed about it? What must one hold to, by believing? Revelation and faith are the objective and subjective sources of solutions.

A most patent difficulty arises, on one hand from the authority of the New Testament which purports to claim that every adult who is to be saved, requires explicit faith in Christ the Savior; and yet, in foreign lands, in remote regions where the Gospel has not yet penetrated, it does not seem possible for infidels, either singly or together, to come to the knowledge of that obligation.

They who are acquainted with the controversy, are aware of two opposing answers to the quandary: 1) Faith in redemption through Christ is a medial necessity. There is no salvation without it. 2) Not so; the necessity is imposed by precept. It binds only when Christ the Redeemer is made known.

These two responses are related as a thesis to an antithesis. They virtually contradict each other and each side is thorny with difficulties. Nor is it possible to reconcile them as branches of some higher syn-

thesis. The fate of a contradiction is this: if one part is true, the other has to be false; there is no third possibility. The logic of contradiction is not a toy. In considering it something trivial, a contradiction may be hidden; but its concealment or latent character is then a greater danger, like rocks beneath the surface that wreck the ships of adventurous sailors who ignore them.

Great attentiveness must be brought to the study proposed here. We shall consider the two opposite positions in the light of their proper principles (*a priori*), and in the light of ensuant facts (*a posteriori*). The question is too complicated to be abridged. The observations submitted as a prelude to Article 3 of this question (cf. above, p. 189) must be remembered as we progress.

First opinion: After the promulgation of the Gospel, explicit faith in Christ the Savior is necessary for salvation. It is obligatory for all, not merely by reason of a precept but as an inherent means of attainment. This means it is binding antecedently and independently of any precept that may be enacted to insure it. The direct effect resulting from this explicit faith is union with the Savior. Manifestly the union is indispensable for salvation, even though there were no precept to bring it about. It is much more necessary, as one can see, than other things which are not necessary at all, except because they are commanded. The sanctification of the Lord's Day once a week instead of twice a month is an instance of precept; abstinence from meat on Fridays is another example.

Explicit faith in Christ has not been necessary, from its nature, in every historical epoch. It was not required in the Old Law, nor previously. This makes it different from sanctifying grace, and different from the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity, for these endowments were always necessary for salvation even among children. There is also a difference between express faith in Christ and faith in the prime credibles, namely, the existence of God as the author of grace and supernatural rewarder. Faith in the pair of credibles was always a medial necessity for salvation, binding upon adults.

But in the first opinion we have undertaken to explore, explicit faith in Christ the Redeemer became a medial necessity for salvation, after the promulgation of the Gospel. It was a prime factor in the divine institution of Christianity. It was like baptism, only superior to it, as an institution of our Lord, inasmuch as faith in the Savior contains faith in

baptism implicitly, the higher governing the lower. These words cannot be weighed too carefully.

A citation of our Lord's declaration in St. John's Gospel passes as the foundation for this view. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believes in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn. 3:14). In no clearer way could the need of explicit faith in our Savior for salvation be canonized as a medial requirement. Union with the Redeemer himself is at stake. There is no salvation without it, whether or not there be a precept to urge it. It is a conjoining that has its goodness from its own excellence, not from any precept. If there is a precept, it can only serve as an extrinsic guarantee accentuating the conjunction as not only good in itself but a requisite for salvation.

The belief under discussion must be explicit. St. John proceeds too clearly to doubt it. "He who believes in him [the Son of God] is not judged. But he who does not believe is already judged because he believes not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." Add St. Paul's testimony: "Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law, but only by the faith of Jesus Christ. We also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by the faith of Christ" (Gal. 2:16). Even though the Savior himself had not used the imperative: "Believe in me" (Jn. 14:1), the fact of his manifestation as Savior would make it obligatory for those who wish to be saved to believe in him. They would have to love him above all things; without faith they could not do so.

In this sense a great number of theologians concur: As Redeemer, Christ must be believed in expressly, if one is to save one's soul. Otherwise the union with the Savior, which salvation itself makes necessary, will be neglected. No precept can effect a substitute or supplant the union if it is missing.

Numerous passages in Sts. Augustine and Jerome are pertinent from another angle. They bear directly on this point of doctrine: There is no remission of sins without faith in Christ the Savior. "Without this faith Cornelius could not have been saved. To build it up in his soul, St. Peter was dispatched to be the architect."¹⁸

Aquinas is also claimed for this first opinion, owing to what he says in treating of those things which all men require as needs for salvation: "After the revelation of grace—that is, under the New Testament—both

¹⁸ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, chap. 7; *Epist.* 190, chap. 2; St. Jerome, in *Ephes.*, chap. 1.

masters and common folks must have an express faith in the mysteries of Christ focusing in the Incarnation" (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7; a. 8 ad 1, 2).

Why does the faith in question have to be explicit? It is because more perfect faith in the Incarnation is required by the New Law, in which the mystery was enacted and revealed, than under the Old Law when it was veiled and only promised. Implicit faith in Christ as Redeemer was a necessity for salvation in the Old Law before Christ came; but now the benefits of redemption through the Incarnation, as an event of the past, impose explicitness in believing as a necessity for all who will be saved.

This stand is confirmed by the Council of Trent in its treatment of the disposition that must precede justification.¹⁴ "They are rightly disposed to receive justifying grace who, being divinely awakened by grace, are guided by hearing to conceive the faith. Therein they are freely set in motion by God. Their belief is fixed in all things that have been revealed and promised, particularly in the act of God, by which the wicked are turned into just men through the outpouring of God's grace in virtue of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Denz. 799).

This indeed is Catholic faith in the sense of the Athanasian symbol, *Quicumque*: "Unless one believes in it faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved."

The exclusiveness of this faith is at the bottom of a condemnation leveled at two propositions of the laxists (Denz. 1214 f.) from which it follows: In the absence of urgent necessity baptism is not to be conferred, nor is absolution to be imparted, in favor of adults who are afflicted with ignorance about the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation, even though their ignorance is invincible.

Elementary knowledge, on the other hand, is enough. A missionary, therefore, is instructed by the Holy Office, "if in the presence of an adult who may be at the point of death (provided he has not lost all capacity to understand) to explain to the patient the mysteries of faith that are necessary as a medium of salvation, chief among which rank the Trinity and the Incarnation."¹⁵

Very many Thomists hold that explicit faith in Christ as Redeemer is a medial necessity for the state of grace. To this they add: Since the advent of Christ, the more probable view favors the truth of the proposi-

¹⁴ Sess. 6, canon 6.

¹⁵ Declaration of 1703, confirmed by Benedict XIV, February 28, 1787.

tion for all persons and conditions—in a word, always.¹⁶ In line with the Thomists are Valentia, Coninck, Molina, and St. Alphonsus.

As presented, this thesis might run: It is a more probable opinion that express faith in Christ as Savior, since the promulgation of the Gospel, is a medium so necessary for salvation that without it no adult can be saved through God's ordinary providence. Nevertheless, John of St. Thomas and Gonet admit the probability of certain exceptions in which implicit belief in Christ would suffice.

Bañez and Cano hold explicit faith in Christ to be always necessary for glorification in heaven, but not for justification on earth. In this they stand alone. Many reject the singular opinion; for every just man, from the moment of his establishment in grace, is an heir to glory, with a title so valid that, were he to die in the state of grace, his salvation would be secure. The condition would not prevent his having to pass through purgatory—even though that would not happen *per se*, nor all the time, nor often—but in purgatory he would be equipped with explicit faith in Christ, ahead of his retarded admission into glory.

Second Opinion: Numerous theologians aver: The opinion just expounded is put forth clearly enough in the works of Sts. Augustine and Thomas. But a signal difficulty grows out of circumstances common in very remote regions. The preaching of the Gospel has not penetrated into them sufficiently. For that reason it is not apparent how the inhabitants can attain to explicit faith in Christ. Facts of this kind make the doctrine of explicit faith as a medial requirement appear hard and harsh, especially because the obligation is put down concerning "a medium so exclusive, that its omission, however inculpable it might be, is sure to frustrate salvation."

These theologians go further. In considering this category of infidels who, by reason of the help received from graces offered them, do what in them lies, they point out that recourse to a special revelation about the redemptive phase of the Incarnation is too extraordinary. It would be rare; it could not be frequent. It is unsound to rely on such reasoning without urgent cause. Therefore, the first opinion may be dismissed as being too dependent on extraordinary interventions without proof, and this is the same as postulating a miracle.

Supplementary Comment. A line might be drawn through this cen-

¹⁶ Leading among the Thomists are John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Ferre, Billuart, and Hugon and Martin of Louvain.

sure. It would not be a miracle in the strict sense. The extraordinary interventions would be in keeping with a law, namely, "to one who does all he can, with the help of God's grace, God does not refuse more grace." But that is not the law for miracles. A miracle does not presuppose an apt disposition of this kind in a subject that it benefits by surprise. Nevertheless, the alleged interventions would be extraordinary.

The perplexities we are presenting have led a number of theologians to deny that, in our age, explicit faith in Christ is a medial necessity for all men in saving their souls. There is a divine precept, however, inculcating it, which is far more eminent than an ecclesiastical command would be. Christ's own words: "Preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15), formulates the divine command.

To be necessary for salvation in virtue of a precept would require the precept to be of a positive nature and emanating freely from the mind directing. This is not the same as springing from the inmost nature of the thing aimed at, nor from the bare institution of Christianity. The obligation to keep holy the Sabbath in the Old Testament, and Sundays in the New, is derived from pure precept imposing weekly, and not merely biweekly, observance.

Consistently enough, the defenders of this second opinion are committed to holding that the explicit faith in Christ has no binding force before the precept is known sufficiently. It so comes to pass that, in the New Law, express faith in Christ is not compulsory for multitudes who do not know of the precept through no fault of their own. In their regard there is no need of recurring to a particular extraordinary revelation. It is sufficient that they believe in Christ implicitly, through the explicit faith they embrace when they assent mentally to the prime credibles: "There is a God and he rewards those who seek him."

This is the language of Richard of Mediavilla, Turianus, De Lugo, Diana, Vázquez, and the nominals who turn their attention away from the nature of things—in this case, ignoring the character of salvation and the means required to gain it—so fixed is their tendency to normalize the facts of experience in some way or other to serve as the preferred, if not the only, measure for guidance in the premises. Later on the positivists will take to the same tangent and open up the road to juridical positivism.

A noteworthy difficulty deprives this second opinion of soundness. If there were nothing but the force of a precept urging one on to explicit faith in Christ, it would follow that, in the Christian era, explicit faith

in its Founder were of less importance than baptism, which the Founder instituted. Theologians are unanimous in contending that baptism of water is a necessity for one and all—a necessity not restricted to a positive precept as its cause—but made compulsory as an indispensable means of salvation by the divine institution of the Christian religion. Barring the case of martyrdom, not even children can be saved without it. Their irresponsibility is no substitute for baptism that has been omitted. Baptism of desire may compensate, under given conditions, for the omission of baptism of water in adults.

How wondrous it would be in our day if explicit faith in the Savior were of less importance than baptism of water which he instituted to save! How paradoxical if implicit faith in the Redeemer would suffice in the New Testament, after having always been necessary in the Old Testament! In the New Testament more perfect faith is necessary. The distinction between the two testaments is one of perfection in faith. Faith, in the New Testament, excels faith in the Old. The revealed principles reviewed when expounding the first opinion remain firm. They have not been neutralized by any part of this second opinion. The up-shot must prevail. There can be no salvation without a union between man and his Savior. This necessity is independent of any precept that may be added thereto. The one element that makes salvific union in the New Testament superior to that of the Old is greater perfection of faith.

The two opinions advanced as first and second are more than opposite; they are contradictory, and compare with each other as a thesis and counter-thesis. They involve an antinomy in the rigorous sense.

Each opinion is thorny with its own difficulties; and no higher synthesis is discernible to absorb the differences. Against Hegel we must affirm: "Of any two propositions that are contradictory, one is true and the other is false without any chance of escape."

A very difficult problem, therefore, confronts us. There is a skein to unravel, a knot to untie. There will be no headway without concentration. No temperamental solution will do. We are not eclectics. A common impulse of eclecticism is to jest with the principle of noncontradiction by searching for a skillful combination. An effort to reconcile contradictories is welcomed as a happy composition. Something like Christian communism begins to magnetize. Suddenly eclecticism develops a latent contradiction of its own, whence follows a contagious spermatization.

It is perilous to make sport of the principle of noncontradiction, just

as it is perilous to play carelessly with fire or with a tiger. Whoever denies this principle is devoured by it. That is what happened to Hegel. A recent splendid article by Père Boyer, scrutinizing the volume of Père de Lubac, *Le Surnaturel*, illustrates how disastrously "gamesterism" can turn out for those who risk sobriety in handling this metaphysical axiom.¹⁷

Attention is to be focused definitely on this point. There is no escape from the contradiction inherent in and between two propositions which are mutually contradictory. In the two opinions advanced there is contradiction:

1) Explicit faith in Christ the Savior is a medial necessity: it is of itself an indispensable means for salvation. 2) Explicit faith in Christ the Savior is not medial necessity for salvation.

With his accustomed skill, Suárez devised an effort at conciliation, or rather, a negotiation leading to mutual concessions. Dom Louis Capéran, one of his followers, puts that construction on his master's aim.¹⁸ It is well to produce here the three propositions in which Suárez formulated his somewhat complicated procedure.

1. In our time explicit faith in the Incarnation is not so necessary that, without having really obtained it or without really having it, one cannot be justified. A boy brought up in the forests, who, after attaining the use of reason, does the best he knows how, will become enlightened. But never hearing of Christ, he will obtain only an explicit faith in God without an explicit faith in Christ.

2. *Per se*, explicit faith to be obtained in Christ is no more necessary for glorification than for previous justification. The glory which is apportioned to one who dies immediately after being justified through implicit faith in Christ, is the result of the receiver's right and title already infused with the grace of faith.

3. Continuing to speak *per se*, Suárez adds: "Explicit faith in Christ is necessary for one and all, both for justification and for glorification, under the law of grace. It binds as a medial necessity in itself or as an object of desire."¹⁹

As may be seen in the foregoing propositions, Suárez begins with a concession to the second opinion under discussion here. Even after the

¹⁷ Cf. *Gregorianum*, 1947, fasc. 2-3.

¹⁸ Cf. Capéran, *Le Problème de salut des infidèles* (2nd edition, 1934), p. 267.

¹⁹ The three parts of Suárez's view are furnished by a footnote in the original. They refer to Suárez, *De Fide*, disp. 12, sect. IV, n. 18.

advent of Christ he admits that justification is possible without an express faith in Christ as Savior. The good boy brought up in the woods, who does the best he knows how, receives it.

Next, a concession is made in favor of the first opinion. "Explicit faith in Christ is now, *per se*, a necessary means of salvation for one and all, either in itself, as the first opinion insists; or in desire—in *voto*—as the second opinion permits." Can desire fold up explicitness inside implicitness? Does the subtleness of this grade conciliate?

The intricate objection is serious. Explicit faith of desire is not distinguishable from the implicit faith that sufficed in the Old Law. Instead of solving the problem posed, a fruitless complication is introduced. Thomists can see in the statements of Suárez nothing better than a juxtaposition of two opinions acknowledged as irreconcilable beforehand. There is a slant toward contingent facts in the disappointing composite. It subordinates to them the necessary principles which should throw light on the facts, but do not. Yet, the principles were revealed and rank prior to the facts. Their content is pure truth and furnishes the basis of the first opinion.

Notwithstanding the favor which accounts for numerous appeals to Suárez in backing up the second opinion, the very competent analyst fails to bring out the medial necessity of objective explicit faith in which the first opinion is anchored.

He is at no pains to heed the decision of St. Thomas which runs thus: "After the revelation of grace, under penalty of forfeiting salvation, the people of all classes, high and low, stand in need of explicit faith in the mysteries of Christ"—all which focus in Christ the Savior.²⁰ This norm affects the whole of the Christian era.

Nevertheless, the inroad made for himself by Suárez has not been useless. It seems to have opened up what the Salmanticenses have rounded out into a third opinion (which Suárez would likely have approved).

Third Opinion: A special distinction qualifies this opinion and makes it a better approach to the solution of the problem, by reason of its consistency with received principles and its abstention from the arbitrariness of eclecticism. By deliberate purpose this third position is made to safeguard what is most important in the conclusion of St. Thomas. It is put into the following form by its defenders, the Carmelites of Sala-

²⁰ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7.

manca: "After the promulgation of the Gospel, explicit faith in Christ—objective faith—is *per se* a medial necessity for salvation. *Per accidens*, however, it can happen, the promulgation of the Gospel notwithstanding, that one or another may attain to salvation without it" (*De Fide*, n. 77). This distinction seems preferable to that of Suárez and it is not unlikely that Suárez might have taken to it. At any rate, its originators, the Salmanticenses, claim herein the patronage of Javellus, Soto, Ledesma, Michael de Medina, and Serra. In recent times others have rallied to this third opinion, particularly Reginald Schultes, O.P.²¹ and his confrère, Père Hugueny. John of St. Thomas and Gonet appraise this opinion of the Carmelites as probable, while they cling to the first opinion as more probable.²²

There is this to say about the defenders of the third opinion: they proceed most creditably. They make no appeal to an allegedly middle position, spanning two contradictories. They hold fast to the medial necessity, so distinctive of the first opinion as against the second, content, as they are, to add an appropriate distinction that makes for greater preciseness.

A more ample presentation of the third opinion would be this: After the promulgation of the Gospel, explicit faith in Christ as Savior is a necessity for all who are saved. It is a medial necessity, required *per se* and with certainty, not barely "more probably." But at times where the Gospel has not been sufficiently preached, exceptions are probable *per accidens*.

Explanation and Proof of the Third Opinion

The first and second opinions must not be lost sight of.

1. *Definition of medial necessity.* The exclusive clause affecting explicit faith as a medium of salvation—namely, without it, salvation becomes impossible, even though the absence of explicit faith is not imputable as a fault—has only a restricted application. It forms no part of the general definition of medial faith. It belongs to a subdivision of the genus and holds only for children. It has no bearing on adults. Exactitude dictates these observations.

Authors like Tanqueray—and there are several of them—have incorporated the exclusive clause into the general definition of medial

²¹ Reginald Schultes, O.P., *On Implicit Faith* (Regensburg, 1920).

²² The words of John of St. Thomas express what Gonet agrees to, namely: "There is a probability that this explicit faith can be supplied for in a particular case, by a faith that is implicit."

necessity, giving rise thereby to a double source of confusion. Through precipitate zeal in producing a students' manual that would furnish clear and practical instruction, they dispensed themselves from weighing attentively the speculative importance of precision in right reasoning. They first confounded a proximate genus, the medial necessity unqualified, with one of its subdivisions, namely, a particular form of medial necessity which imposes its demands, not only *per se*, but always and ever, without a single exception. Secondly, they made no allowance to speak of, in this respect, between adults and children. No adult can escape guilt, at least in some remote degree, as through personal negligence, for the simple reason that God makes advances through the offering of grace. Any adult who profits by this help of grace, and does what in him lies because of it, is sure to obtain from God whatever further aid is always necessary for salvation. An illustration of this providence is pointed out by Aquinas in the dispatching of St. Peter to Cornelius. The text is well known: "If a person has been reared in the forests, and yet follows the guidance of natural reason in the pursuit of goodness and flight from evil ways, it is to be held rigorously as a certainty that God will either show him by an interior inspiration whatever he needs to believe, or he will send him some preacher of the faith, as he sent Peter to Cornelius" (Acts 10:19, 20) (*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 11 ad 1).

This is sound Catholic doctrine, quite in line with the declaration of Pius IX: "The gifts of heavenly grace will never be withheld from those who, with sincerity of purpose, seek refreshment in the light of grace by willingly asking for it" (Denz. 1648). A universal providence covers every such situation as the same pontiff describes: "To Ourselves, and to you, it is known that they who are afflicted with invincible ignorance about our most holy religion and who exercise a serious conscientiousness in keeping the natural law with its precepts, such as they have been engraved by God on the hearts of all—granting that they are intrinsically disposed to be obedient to God and are leading a life of honesty and righteousness—can, by the active power of divine light and grace, attain to life eternal. The reason is because God, who sees, searches, and knows clearly, the minds, spirits, thoughts, and habits of everybody, is so constrained by his infinite goodness and clemency that he can by no means permit anyone to be punished with eternal tortures who has not contracted the guilt of a voluntary fault" (Denz. 1677).

From this official statement it is clear that the aforesaid clause, deal-

ing with the means of salvation, and defining a "medium"—without which, even when the omission is inculpable, salvation is not possible—does not belong in the general definition of salvific mediacy. It belongs instead to a consequent subdivision, which is this: In the case of children, as for baptism of water, there is a medial necessity, binding in every instance save martyrdom. The Holy Innocents, being martyrs, did not need baptism of water.

There are those who regret that Aquinas did not sufficiently explain what he meant by a medial necessity. There was no need of explaining more than his general terms conveyed. The terms he used and the terms he omitted were equally purposeful. The Holy Doctor was preoccupied with making a right choice between two members—*either, or*. In his judgment, a medial necessity grows out of the inherent nature of a case, *per se*, and is thereby different from a necessity imposed by an exterior precept. Acuteness in the formal use of speech determined his voluntary use of general terms to express a general idea, and the exclusion of an impertinent appendage. Faith he proclaimed to be *per se*, a medial necessity for salvation.

Elsewhere, he emphasizes that the "initial subjection of man to God is through faith; wherefore, the treatment of precepts imposed by a law." The two kinds of necessity are thus sufficiently well treated without being mixed. In the *Summa* they are twelve questions apart.²³ Over and over again the Angelic Master repeats: "God never is and never has been wanting in man's regard, save through man's fault." It would be worth one's while to check up on the passages listed in tables and fuller indexes of the works of St. Thomas, under such headings as "Baptism," "Sacrament," "Salvation."²⁴

2. *Interrelation of medial necessity and necessity imposed by precept.* A medial necessity as such, binding independently of precept, can be necessary for salvation in either of two ways: *per se* and always, without exception; also, *per se* but not always. *Per se*, in the natural order, a man is born with four fingers and a thumb on each hand. However, that does not always happen. Sometimes there is an additional finger; sometimes there is one short—*per accidens*.

Such "exceptions" in nature are said to "prove the rule." Normally, a given natural cause always produces the same effect; but it requires

²³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, medial necessity of faith, IIa IIae, q. 2, aa. 4–8; pertinent precepts, IIa IIae, q. 16; statement of the priority, IIa IIae, q. 16, a. 1.

²⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 98, a. 2 ad 4; IIa IIae, q. 177, a. 1; q. 178, a. 1; I *Sent.*, d. 48, q. 3 ad 1; III *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1; q. 1 ad 1.

uniformity to operate in the same circumstances. Let the circumstances be changed and hindrances appear, the effect will be different.

Applying this parallel to the mystery of salvation, it serves as a guide. "Explicit faith in Christ is necessary for the salvation of all, since the promulgation of the Gospel. It is an inherently medial necessity, required *per se*. *Per accidens*, however, it is not always compulsory, as in regions where the Gospel has not been sufficiently preached."

3. *Sacramental necessity*. Theologians hold unanimously for the medial necessity of baptism of water for salvation. Over and above precepts it has a necessity all its own for everybody, even for adults. Nevertheless, all theologians admit, in favor of adults, that cases may arise in which baptism of desire supplies for its absence, as when baptism of water is impossible. The desire itself need be only implicit. And what is thus effective in baptism would be equally effective for the sacrament of penance, were the latter impossible.

4. *Spiritual Communion*. Touching formulas of doctrine, desiring may serve as a substitute for the Holy Eucharist, the same as for baptism and penance (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 73, a. 3). The Holy Eucharist is *per se* necessary for the salvation of all—*per se*, but not always. *Per accidens*, sacramental reception may not be possible; but an implicit desire—a "spiritual Communion," so called—supplies for the sacrament. The Angelic Doctor clarifies this reasoning.

Comparative elucidations. Aquinas says that the reception of baptism is a necessary beginning of the spiritual life. [It is in itself a regeneration.] The reception of the Eucharist is necessary for the consummation of the same (infused) spiritual life, not as though it bestowed the life substantially, but as though the consummation were acquired in virtue of the soul's desire. Just as a goal aimed at is the last thing reached, while being the first thing chosen—it works as a final cause, figuring as an initial motive of desire and activation—so also the nourishment of the Eucharist is through progressive consummation in the making. Children, by the fact of [regenerative] baptism, are ordained to receive Eucharistic grace. Indeed the grace of baptism matures in the grace of the Eucharist, just as a boy matures in the man.

Supplemental comparisons may be gathered from different parts of the *Summa*.²⁵ Aquinas affirms: "The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary for salvation and are possessed by all just souls. They are connected with charity." Then, since the virtue of faith is perfected

²⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 68, aa. 2, 5; IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 4 ad 2.

through the gift of understanding, he explains: "Believers through the gift understand that the things proposed by faith are to be believed and that no departure from them is allowable."

This operation of the gift of understanding is valid against atheists. It is brought into play even by those honest people who know little more than the prime credibles explicitly. However, they must be disposed implicitly to accept all other mysteries if, perchance [in their manner of reasoning], there are any others that have been revealed. Now, just as the gift of understanding, which is necessary for salvation, may be possessed by certain good men in this imperfect rudimentary degree, so also with infused faith itself, considered as a necessity *per se* for salvation. It, too, can be extremely imperfect, relative to the knowledge of truths to be believed, among numerous people in regions where the Gospel has not been sufficiently preached. But this state of affairs is *per accidens*.

The points and phases here expounded will make our proof of the third opinion easier.

The first part of the third opinion. Under the New Law, explicit faith in Christ is a medial necessity for salvation, independently of any precept enacted to enforce it.

The same proofs furnished for the first opinion are applicable here; namely, the passages from Holy Scripture, the texts borrowed from St. Augustine and other Fathers, and from the Angelic Doctor. In addition to them, a twofold theological proof is available.

1. There can be no salvation without union between man and the Savior. For adults, the union is effected not merely through the infusion of faith and charity, which baptized infants enjoy, but through the act of faith in addition. Hence, St. Paul's declaration to the Galatians: "Man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Christ. We also believe in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 2:16). In this way, a deliberate act of faith in Christ the Savior is required for salvation, and this is more than what is requisite and sufficient for infants—namely, an infusion of faith passively received.

In the New Law it is furthermore required that faith be more perfect than in the Old Law, under which an implicit faith in the Savior to come was indispensable. The better faith of the New Law must be explicit, in the Savior who has come, in him who was crucified for the salvation of all men. Nevertheless, this Christian faith admits of numerous grades, from a minimum up to the most perfect. Its superiority over

pre-Christian faith is ingrained in apostolic tradition. No clearer asseverations need be sought than St. Paul's: Faith in Christ Jesus produces "children of God" (Gal. 3:26). Before it was revealed "the law kept believers shut up" (Gal. 3:23), and their experiences were of "things that happened to them in figure" (1 Cor. 10:11).

2. The position is confirmed by a comparison of the Salmanticenses (*De Fide*, n. 79). *Per se*, under the Christian dispensation, two things are required in the same way. One is explicit faith in Christ; the other is the sacrament of baptism, actually received. Indeed baptism can be more urgent than the individual's faith. But with regard to the kind of necessity, rather than the degree, the actual reception of the sacrament is obligatory for all, *per se*, even for adults, in gaining salvation. And this is a medial necessity, notwithstanding extrinsic precepts otherwise imposing it as an act of obedience. Therefore, and it is more rigorously true, that the explicit faith of Christ is a medial necessity for salvation, independently of whatever precept may be involved to sustain its observance.

The major premise does not call for proof, beyond the fact that no adult can be actually promoted to the grace of baptism who has not explicitly accepted the faith of Christ, since baptism is in itself a profession of that faith.

An illustration is offered in the Acts of the Apostles. Before baptizing the eunuch of the Ethiopian Queen Candace, St. Philip made sure of the foreigner's faith. To be baptized—as the eunuch desired—a man must first believe with his whole heart. The eunuch answering said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). This argument has been thrust forward deservedly by the Carmelites of Salamanca.

We ourselves see no mere probability in their reasoning. We hold for certain that, in our day, if salvation is sought the preliminary faith in Christ as Savior must be explicit, and that it is a medial necessity, not a prescription originating radically in any positive precept. This is in keeping with what St. Thomas says where he is dealing expressly with the subject (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7).

Second part of the third opinion. John of St. Thomas is aligned with us in supporting the following proposition as probable. The medial necessity we have analyzed as binding *per se* may not always be verified. It is probable that exceptions may occur in territories where the Gospel has not been sufficiently preached. This, however, is *per accidens*. It is "an exception that proves the rule." For this reason the rule

is couched in a manner that provides for it, through the modifying phrase: "After the sufficient promulgation of the Gospel."

For an improved understanding of the issue, one needs to know that the Gospel is not promulgated after the technical manner of civil law in a state. It has not on it the stamp of a civil edict, which is officially published on an appointed day from diverse centers in the state. The promulgation of the Gospel is a progressive work, done in the form of preaching, in different tongues, and for the benefit of a great variety of people.

An infidel dwelling among Mohammedans, for instance, and habitually doing what his conscience judges to be right, may have no better help than an interior inspiration to keep good. He may have no knowledge whatever of revelation strictly so called, nor of an immediate intervention bordering on the miraculous. He simply follows along the traces of a lost revelation that still survive, and trusts in a God "who is, and who rewards." Implicitly the infidel would be making room for faith in Christ.

St. Thomas confirms this view, where he pauses to consider an infidel child arriving at the use of moral reason. The first awakening is in the domain of thought, by deliberating about oneself. If, on this occasion, he determines to make for the right end in life, "he obtains the remission of original sin through grace."²⁶ Such an effect would mark a special form of baptism, through desire. It could not take place in an adult without an act of faith and charity. Furthermore, there is no connotation in the example of any explicit knowledge about Christ.

We may join with the Salmanticenses (*De Fide*, n. 79) and Suárez in maintaining that "it is possible for a catechumen to have had nothing proposed to him for belief but God, the supernatural author and end of man. No explicit knowledge of Christ the Lord has reached his ears. Nevertheless, the catechumen conceives a definite faith in God as his supernatural author and supernatural end, not believing explicitly in Christ of whom he has never heard. From the fact that his new faith is firm in God as supernatural beginning and end, he is capable of loving God through charity, and therefore may be justified. Therefore, under the New Law, it is only *per accidens*, that is, a pure contingency, that an individual adult may attain to justification without having an explicit faith in Christ."

Another comparison lends force to this conviction. There is some-

²⁶ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6.

thing in common between baptism of water, penance, and, as St. Thomas would have it, the Holy Eucharist. *Per se*, all three are required as medial necessities for adults; but *per accidens*, their graces may be bestowed as a result of implicit desire.

Hence, in styling the second part of the present thesis "probable," we are only making room for probable exceptions; but that does not weaken our contention that the first part of the thesis is certain. There is no getting around the requirement of the New Law for explicit faith in Christ as a medial necessity for salvation, speaking *per se*; and this medial necessity compels of itself, whether or not any precept otherwise prescribes it. Our meaning is clear. Even though no such precept were in existence, the medial necessity of explicit faith in Christ would persist, owing to the nature of salvation, which *per se* demands a union with the Savior, possible in the New Testament only through explicit faith—implicit faith having sufficed *per se*, only under the Old Law.

A minor supplemental comparison furnishes parallel support. As we have proved earlier, the infusion of all three theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—is *per se* a single, simple act of God. The virtues hang together with habitual grace. *Per accidens*, however, there may be a malicious disposition in the subject, as in adult baptism, that disqualifies him for the reception of sanctifying grace and charity.²⁷

Difficulty. A certain difficulty is offered from texts in which St. Thomas is claimed to uphold a more exclusive position, by making the said medial necessity obligatory both *per se* and always, thereby nullifying the exceptional contingencies we have classified, as in its failing *per accidens*. Two texts are appealed to in establishing the difficulty.²⁸

In treating of a necessity for salvation which is distinct from a necessity of precept, the Angelic Doctor writes: "In the period opened up by the revelation of grace, both classes, high and low, are obliged to have an explicit faith in the mysteries of Christ." Again, "after the coming of Christ, the mystery of redemption was complete. It was preached corporeally and visibly. As a consequence, all are now bound to believe in it expressly; and if instruction is not available, a revelation will be made by God, unless, through personal guilt, one chooses to remain indifferent."

Three Replies. 1. The Salmanticenses respond that Aquinas is oc-

²⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 2 ad 3.

²⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7, *In III Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, quaestio-
nula 2.

cupied with a man who is already in the state of grace and supposes that he does not fall from it. What the Doctor says is quite suitable for the preservation and increase of grace. It is regrettable that there is nothing in the context of Aquinas to warrant this construction. Nevertheless, even though, in the second quotation all exceptions seem to be barred, the full mind of St. Thomas demands that we moderate the apparent exclusiveness, in the light of what we have quoted from him concerning the infidel child who eventually is converted to God after having done in the beginning only what he was able (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6).

2. St. Thomas was speaking only of the world he knew, before the discovery of America. None can tell what he might have concluded had he known about the vast regions where inhabitants might all the while have been reached by God's grace and saved.

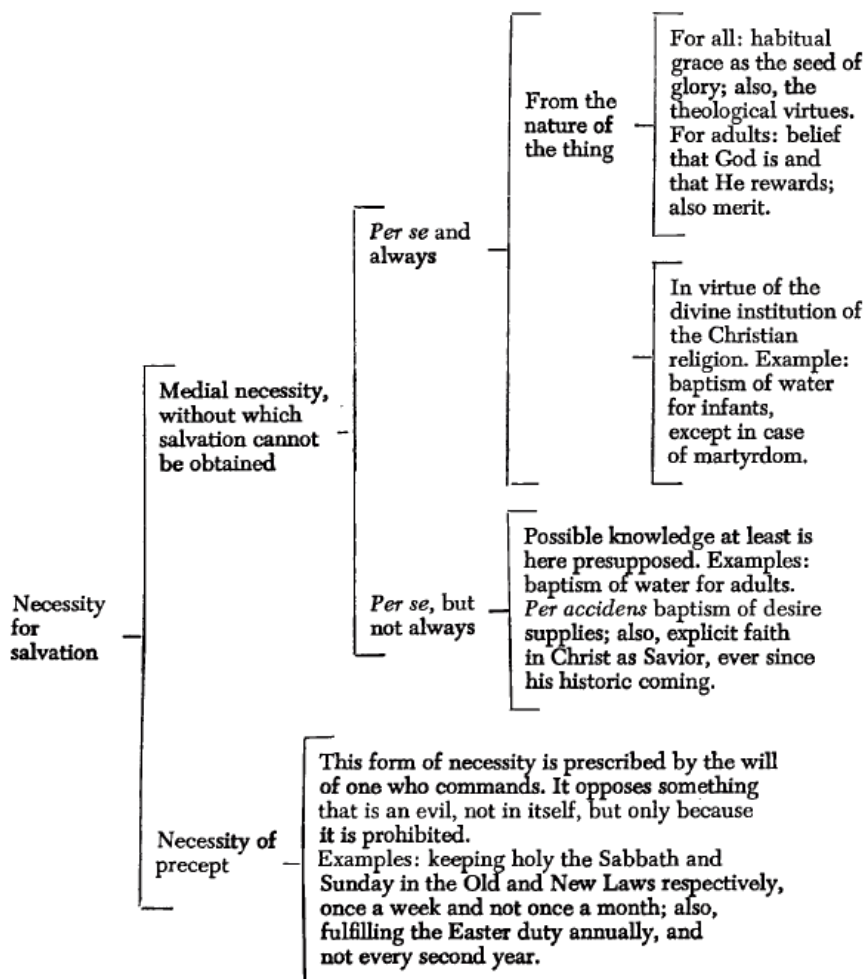
3. It still remains probable that the Gospel law admits of no exceptions. And since Christ died for all, should the preaching of the Gospel be insufficient, "if anybody were to follow the guidance of natural reason in the pursuit of goodness and flight from evil, God would, by an interior inspiration," reveal not only the rudimentary prime credibles, but also the redemptive power of the Incarnation.

This last reply, apart from its probability, might be true. If it is, it is very elevating and high above the interpretation of the Salmanticenses and many others, which has been submitted in the first reply. The first reply is easier to grasp; but this third and last reply intrigues us as certain. It is perfectly aligned with the medial necessity of explicit faith in Christ, as *per se* binding upon all those who will be saved. This lifts it above the field of probability in itself. And yet exceptions may be probable, the same as in the cases of baptism of water, penance, and the Holy Eucharist.

Recapitulation. To sum up, there are three kinds of medial necessity: 1) One which holds *per se* and always, at every particular instant, rooted in the nature of the necessary thing. It is inherent in sanctifying grace as the seed of glory. 2) A medial necessity required *per se* and always, not however from the nature of the necessary thing, nor at every particular time, but in virtue of the divine institution of Christianity; for example, the baptism of water, for infants. 3) A medial necessity *per se*, though not always demanded owing to the need of possible knowledge in the premises. Such is baptism of water for adults. *Per accidens*, exceptions occur, in which cases baptism of desire suffices. After the advent of Christ, explicit faith in him as Savior is a necessity

of this third type. Whatever exceptions there may be are *per accidens*. Faith in Christ is then implicit.

The following synopsis is submitted with a view to removing all ambiguity by a "yes and no" process. Its contradictory members are presented, as opposites in themselves; while latent contradictions, omissions, and confusion are definitely guarded against.



It is manifest that explicit faith in Christ as Savior since the Incarnation is more necessary for salvation than the sanctification of the Lord's Day once a week instead of once a month. Express faith in the Re-

deemer is a medial necessity for salvation. It is a necessary good, independently of every positive precept. Its opposite is not only an evil because it is prohibited; it is prohibited because it is an evil anyway. Fundamental laws are inscribed not so much on paper as in the hearts of men. For conscience they are "unwritten laws" that bind interiorly.

Apologists indeed have liberty to emphasize accidental exceptions. It is the duty of theologians and missionaries to accentuate that explicit faith in the Savior as having already come is, *per se*, a medial necessity for salvation.

Objection. An obvious difficulty needs to be explained. The exceptions brought up to offset the traditional Christian principle were on a large scale in undiscovered America (to say nothing of their frequency in other remote regions). Does not such commonness entitle them to be removed from a class regarded as *per accidens*?

Conformably to the mind of St. Thomas it may be stated: "Evil has no cause except *per accidens*. . . . In every species, a defect in nature taints only the smaller fraction. It is only in human kind that the reverse is true. Formally speaking, humanity's good is not measured according to sense-life but according to reason. It is reason that makes one a man. And yet, most men follow the lure of sense rather than of reason."²⁹

In the human race, therefore, a contingency that is *per accidens* can turn out in the majority of cases. The alleged exceptions, accordingly, could be quite frequent—and yet, who knows but God?—without their ceasing to be *per accidens*. Commonness itself would not upset this classification. *Per se* the reason lies in the fact that it is the joining of man with the Savior through faith that constitutes the medial necessity for salvation.

Apart from conjectural statistics which are gratuitously alleged as weakening the position of St. Thomas, the holy Doctor submits principles that make thinkers pause before getting unbalanced by the thought of baffling exceptions being too numerous.

It is a more absolute theme that engages St. Thomas in the premises. It bears directly on the number of God's elect in the human race and the providence described by our Lord in the terms: "Many are called but few are chosen" (Mt. 20:16; 22:14).³⁰

"In the natural state, a proportionate good works out in most cases;

²⁹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 49, a. 3 ad 5. Cf. also, Ia, q. 63, a. 9 ad 1; Ia IIae, q. 71, a. 2 ad 3; *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3 ad 17; a. 5 ad 16.

³⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 23, a. 7 ad 3.

its deficiency turns out in fewer cases. But a more excellent good, one that exceeds the common productivity of nature, is realized in the minority of cases. Eminence attained through a profound grasp of intellectual knowledge is of this sort. Its degrees are for an élite. But there is no creaturely estimate competent to represent adequately eternal beatitude in the vision of God." *Ergo*.

Applying this principle of election to the exceptions discovered in remote regions and envisaged as running counter to the explicit faith required for salvation where the Gospel has not been sufficiently preached—the frequency of the exceptions can only be relative and reports about it are exaggerated—many men fail to do what in them lies, and this prevents them from attaining even to implicit faith in Christ the Redeemer. It is only among men who share in supernatural life beforehand that the majority possess explicit faith in Christ the Savior.

Further rationalizing would be inept. God alone knows infallibly the number as well as the fewness of his elect.

Article 8

Is Explicit Faith in the Blessed Trinity a Medial Necessity for Salvation?

St. Thomas treats this inquiry the same way as he does that about Christ. His answer may therefore be propounded in the same manner (cf. above, Article 7).

Truths that are to be believed in virtue of a precept

1. Under the law of the Gospel all are obliged to believe explicitly, at least in substance, the Apostles' Creed, all precepts of the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer and the three common sacraments, baptism, penance, and the Holy Eucharist. This has been the traditional practice of the Church since the days of the apostles.

2. This precept of faith binds *per se*, and not because of any contingent motive, like the reception of penance. Contrary doctrine has been condemned as laxist (cf. Denz. 1166).

3. A negative precept forbidding the denial of faith received or previously admitted is binding at all times.

4. An affirmative precept imposing the duty of assenting to revealed truths begins to bind an adult, *per se*, at the first instant of moral living—that is, the dawn of moral reason—provided the truth of faith has been sufficiently shown him. This obligation is especially urgent in environment where there is a danger of withholding assent to truths of faith that have been sufficiently proposed.

5. A condemned proposition of the laxist brand (Denz. 1154) runs thus: "An infidel who believes not, will escape the guilt of infidelity, if he has in his favor an opinion of the grade called 'less probable.'" Take a Protestant who persists deliberately in Protestantism when the truth of his religion appears to be less probable. If he doubts and thinks that Catholicism is equally probable, or more probable and safer, there arises an obligation binding in conscience to investigate and seek light from God, with a view to grasping correctly what he needs to know about the credibility and grace of faith. Otherwise, as St. Alphonsus writes, he sins against faith by neglecting the means that lead to true faith. His plight is that of ignorance, voluntary and culpable. He cannot be accredited as a man of good faith. Billuart does not doubt that many heretics who mingle commonly with Catholics are living in this condition.

6. Since the condemnation of laxism (1679 A.D.) all theologians, probabilists included, hold fast to the following principle: In matters pertaining to salvation, practical decisions concerning things that are medially necessary must accord with the safer views. Too much caution cannot be exercised when eternity is at stake. The safer procedure for one beginning to doubt is not to force oneself to believe immediately when credibility is not sufficiently perceived, but rather to search for the truth and pray. This program would be open to a Mohammedan, once he begins to discern that Christ's divinity is probably revealed. He must bring himself to desire the safer course and to choose it. Inquiry and prayer will be the instruments of his enlightenment. In proceeding thus, he will in time grasp sufficiently the credibleness and grace of faith.

7. How often, or when, is one obliged to exercise the faith, aside from occasions in which there is the peril of denying it?

Pope Innocent XI facilitates correct bearings through his condemnation of two laxist errors, which are these: First error: It is enough to

elicit one act of faith in a lifetime (Denz. 1167). Second error: It suffices that one has in the past believed these mysteries [The Trinity and Incarnation] by any solitary single act, just once (Denz. 1215).

How contrary these errors are to the prophetic and apostolic diction: The "just man lives by faith" (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38).

Boasting liberals retort: Man does not subsist on principles nor can he keep always chanting: "I believe in one God."

Holy Scripture remains adamant. Both Testaments proclaim that "the just man" lives in and by and from his faith. Therefore, no single act of faith can sanctify for life's full duration.

Acts of faith are no less obligatory than acts of hope, charity, and the other virtues that have to be repeated while life lasts. Many theologians hold that the precept of faith must be actuated when one is in danger of death, together with the precepts of hope and charity. It should be obeyed also in face of a strong temptation against faith, and many other times as well.

But at what particular junctures? This query draws a variety of answers. The safer reply finds numerous upholders. The precept of faith obliges *per se* on Sundays and feast days, in the hearing of Mass. Mass cannot be heard properly without an act of faith. *Per accidens*, the precept binds because of a necessary connection with some other obligation; as when a particular precept imposes a duty that cannot be performed correctly without faith. Such a duty is that of Christian repentance, the worthy reception of any sacrament, the recitation of acts of hope, charity, and religion. But in these combinations the act of faith is identified with a deed otherwise prescribed. It does not entail the specific recitation of a creed.

For the present, no more will be said about the precept of faith. It is enough to have analyzed in this passing manner its relation with the general necessity of faith, which developed as the apex of Question Two.

In the closing question of this treatise (q. 16) we shall trace briefly in two separate articles a characteristic of the Old Testament. In Mosaic times, no precepts existed regulating the exposition and acceptance of the credibles pertaining to the more secret mysteries of faith. These were not expounded to the people. The rank and file of believers held to an explicit faith in God as rewarder, with an implicit faith in the promised Redeemer.

There was in use, nevertheless, a certain collection of precepts pertaining to the gifts of knowledge and understanding. They are singled out in Deuteronomy for special homage and transmission. They are on the background of the great commandment of love:

"The Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt tell them to thy children; and thou shalt meditate on them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt tie them as a sign on thy hand; and they shall hang and swing between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house" (Dt. 6:4-9); "Forget not the words. . . . Thou shalt teach them to thy sons and to thy grandsons" (Dt. 4:9).

This crystallization of Mosaic precepts, which our Lord came to fulfill in detail and not destroy, has been immortalized in the New Testament (cf. Mt. 5:18).

Articles 9 and 10: Merit of the Act of Faith

These articles have been treated between Articles 2 and 3 of the series which terminates here. The anticipation was explained at that point.

QUESTION THREE

The External Act of Faith

Introduction

Two articles will be devoted to the subject. First, is confession of the faith an act of faith? Second, is confession of the faith necessary for salvation?

This question is of the practical order and is of no less consequence than Question Two. In our time, it has acquired importance because of fears that agitate the world and which raise the question of martyrdom. Can the endurance of martyrdom be imposed by precept? Be that as it may, we reserve the treatment of fear to Question Nineteen, Article 2.

Article 1

Is Confession of the Faith an Act of Faith?

Statement of the question. Holy Scripture employs the term confession in three senses: (1) the confession of one's faith in revealed mysteries and their accessories; (2) the confession of sins in the sacrament of penance; (3) plus the rendering of thanks to God, in the spirit of worship. The third form of confession is an act of latria.

The difficulty here concerning us arises from variable circumstances which seem to force the specification of a confession of the faith as an act of fortitude directed against mundane fear and confusion; or as an act of charity, insofar as faith "operates through charity" and proves its fervor by overflowing into the obvious.

Conclusion. An exterior confession of faith is an act of faith, elicited by faith and not commanded by another virtue.¹

Scriptural Proof. The "Ordinary Gloss" reposes tradition itself on the apostolic declarations: "Your faith is growing . . . in all persecutions you endure" (2 Thes. 1:3-4); "As it is written: 'I believed, for which cause I have spoken; we also believed. For which cause we speak also'" (2 Cor. 4:13).

Theological Proof. An exterior act is elicited or produced immediately by the virtue to whose end it conduces in an essential manner. Fasting, for instance, promotes the end of abstinence. This is because the order of agencies needs to correspond with the order of the ends they aim at. But an exterior confession of faith signifies essentially the interior virtue of faith that animates it. Therefore, the outward confession is in the strict sense an act of faith elicited by faith.

Objection. But faith is in the intellect. Therefore, it cannot elicit an exterior act. It has to command it.

Reply. An act is said to be elicited by any virtue when it is immediately regulated and directed by it. It does not have to be rooted in the same faculty as the virtue. So long as the habit of no other virtue intervenes, there is no commanding necessary. This is equally true of all exterior acts of virtue, whether of charity, religion, obedience, or any other. But the outward confession of faith is regulated and directed without any intermediary. *Ergo.*

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 3, a. 1 ad 3.

If it be argued that external confession is possible for one who is not a believer, who has not the habit of faith within him, but is in search of it, as he shows by imitating the faithful through praying, let this be said: The disposition described is equivalent to a condition of belief comparable to the benevolence of one who, in giving alms, has no thought of exercising the virtue of mercy, and yet his almsdeed is construed as an act of mercy. The point in our discussion is to bring out the normal relationship between exterior confession and the subjective disposition impelling toward it, on the part of those who truly believe.

An act of fortitude may at times be involved in the said confession, but that is on the side. It is not the virtue of fortitude that matures formally in the confession. Fortitude is cojoined with the confession *per accidens*. It removes a hindrance or masters it. It neutralizes fear or shame. It does not cause the confession *per se*.

Valentia relies upon living faith for his perspective, the faith that works through charity. Charity does not elicit, it commands the exterior acts of all virtues subordinated to it. Religious observances are of this kind. But in the confession of faith the subordinate position of faith itself is no interference between faith and the active eliciting of its own confession without an intermediary.

When treating of charity we shall bring out the fact that, because of its eminence, charity may command either interior or external acts of faith, and, therefore, outward confession. But charity presupposes faith as a distinct virtue that can be infused and possessed without it, and whose confession may be made without it, and whose activity in eliciting need not be dispensed with, through the higher action of charity.

Article 2

The Necessity of Confessing the Faith for Salvation

Statement of the question. The solution of practical problems growing out of the exterior profession of faith can be very perplexing. The objections marshaled against it have engaged the attention of St. Thomas according to his wont: 1) The proper function of faith is to join the human mind with divine truth. That end can be realized without there being any exterior confession of faith. 2) Outward confession is in order for preachers and catechists whose duty it is to instruct others

in faith; but among others, it is uncalled-for. 3) It might even be an occasion of scandal, by becoming provocative of irritation among unbelievers. Might it not be charitable to suppress the external profession of faith altogether? This mode of arguing is a contemporary abuse of the name charity, deplored by Pope Pius XI, and illustrated on a grand scale by those who, under the pretext of charity, seek union among Churches without requiring Catholic faith, and clearly to the detriment of all supernatural faith.

There is a connection between the present thesis on the confession of faith and what we shall hereafter discuss concerning worldly subservience through human fear (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 19, a. 2), as distinct from servile fear, and the fear of God which is holy and may endure unto life everlasting. Mundane fear may be popularized as cultural self-respect, which hesitates not to offend God for the sake of escaping temporal embarrassment. It is a kind of exaggerated homage of human opinion and standards, even when they run counter to the word of God. Exaggeration of this kind was stigmatized by Seneca as a headache. Under pretext of charity, the obsequiousness of timorous humanizing is ingrained in the sophistications of liberalism. Its courteous formula is its last word: "There is never an occasion in public for a believer to confess his faith." It is as if faith were the asset of an exclusively interior life, except insofar as the secret cultivation of it might be harmlessly exteriorized in church or in some back sacristy. A term has been coined to designate this pusillanimous aberration of counterfeit charity. It is "caritanism," to match "fideism," which has to do with counterfeit faith.

Supplemental Explanation. In characterizing fideism as a "counterfeit" of faith and caritanism as a "counterfeit" of charity, the idea of an abuse is emphasized as common to both. Just as the fideism of De Bonald and Bonetty required a formal motive of faith but located its necessity where it could not be [that is, lineally antecedent to reason], so also caritanism is an abuse of charity, whose formal motive is also located where it cannot be—that is, exclusively within the range of a human goal. But charity is a best among all created elements. Its corruption is a superlative evil: "*Corruptio optimi pessima.*"

Our present pursuit is to determine whether there is ever an obligation to confess the faith exteriorly; or whether the faith might not be kept under cover.

Martyrdom is stalking by. Should an occasion arise, is there a pre-

cept that would oblige one to die for the faith rather than live to deny it? Not for the first time is this issue being broached. It is brought to the fore in every persecution. Theologians thresh out the pros and cons of methods to avoid persecution, now as in the first days of Christianity, in mission lands of the Orient, and elsewhere. Fanaticism, being false zeal, must be repudiated; and yet, if Tertullian is invoked, he held that flight from persecution is always unlawful.¹

In practical issues it is sometimes difficult to tell apart true charity from false, true from false zeal, true humility from humility that is false. At times the gift of counsel is necessary, or the charism, discernment of spirits. Two poles are to be avoided in excesses, liberalism and fanaticism. But how?

Conclusion. The outward confession of faith is a necessity for salvation, not on all occasions, nor in every place, but whenever its omission would deprive God of due honor or the neighbor of a proportionate advantage to which he has a right.

Scriptural Proof. "With the heart we believe unto justice; but with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). In what way? St. Matthew records Christ's enlivening answer: "Fear not them who kill the body and are not able to kill the soul" (Mt. 10:28); "Everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But him who shall deny me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33). To the false peace of liberalism or opportunism, our Lord's violent warning is applicable: "Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but the sword" (Mt. 10:34). No clearer prophecy could be asked, bearing on menacing persecutions, in which obedience would require the faithful to undergo martyrdom rather than risk denying the faith. Christ's mission was holily divisive: "I came to set a man at variance with his father; and the daughter against her mother; and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. A man's enemies shall be they of his own household" (Mt. 10:35-36). Treasons get into a racing mood during persecutions. "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. . . . Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. . . . He who finds his life shall lose it and he who shall lose his life shall find it" (Mt. 10:37-39).

These last words find their utter accomplishment in the hazards of persecution. They who choose to save their lives by denying the faith,

¹ Cf. Tertullian, *De fuga in persecutione*.

forfeit them; whereas one who chooses to lose his life on God's account finds life, glorified life. Since God made all things for himself, then our blood is more his than our own, and nobody can love his own blood better when an occasion arises, than by pouring it out for the glory of God, as a witness to the truth of the Gospel.

The Master of life and death opens his mind in St. Luke's Gospel: "He who shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty and that of his Father and of the holy angels" (Lk. 9:26). St. Paul echoes: It is "a faithful saying: if we be dead with him, we shall live also with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us. If we believe not, he continues faithful; he cannot deny himself" (2 Tm. 2:13).

Peter's sin, committed in the threefold denial of Christ in his Passion, was a sin against the outward confession of faith: "I know not Christ." It did not prove loss of faith. The Apostle would have lost faith and sinned mortally against the obligatory interior act of faith, had he admitted the denial into his own heart or deliberately doubted any revealed truth about which he had received sufficient instruction. Exterior cursing and swearing through fear, fall short of evidence that he did so. See the commentary of Aquinas on Mt. 26:74.

Proof from the teaching of the Church. Church doctrine is directed against numerous errors: Against the Helcesaites who taught that during a persecution it is lawful to deny the faith, provided only one clings to it in one's heart; against the Priscillianists who popularized the maxim: "Brave oaths, brave perjury, but keep the secret of your faith to yourself"; ² against the laxists (cf. Denz. 1168) who favored the advice: "If one is on trial and is interrogated in court, I counsel that he confess the faith openly for the glorification of God and the faith. Yet, I do not hold silence to be *per se* sinful." Many modern politicians stand condemned with the laxists, since they teach that public personages must observe indifferentism in practice, while fostering true faith in the heart. They also hold that civil power or the state has no right to profess or protect Christian faith.

Such is the true import of two propositions (77 and 78) that were condemned in the *Syllabus* of Pope Pius IX (cf. Denz. 1777, 1778, 1779): "In this our age, it is no longer expedient to have the Catholic religion pass as the only state religion, excluding thereby all other forms of wor-

² Eusebius, *Hist.*, Bk. VI, chaps. 31, 70.

ship." Again, "In certain regions that are Catholic, it is a laudable caution in law, that all immigrants have the freedom of choosing their own form of public worship." Other documents prepare for a climax signified in the *Syllabus* of Pope Pius IX.³ It is in the form of a condemnation affecting the following proposition: "The Roman Pontiff can and ought to step up progress with liberalism, and also be conciliatory and compromising with recent civilization" (Denz. 1780). Modernists show where that policy would lead; wherefore, Pope Leo XIII, in protest, published his encyclical *Immortale Dei* (Denz. 1868), and St. Pius X, the encyclical *Pascendi* (Denz. 2082). Some modernists covertly and others very openly contend that all religions are true. The affinity between liberalism and indifferentism is patent; but liberalism appropriates the false guise of charity, or caritanism. Radically, indifferentism is an opposite of both virtues, faith and charity.

As for the rigorist view, certain extremists, not any too numerous, make rare appearances in history to support it. They have taught in the past: "Rather die than take to flight in persecution." Tertullian is outstanding with his work, *De fuga in persecutione*. But the Gospel rings clear. St. Matthew records the Master's own words: "When they shall persecute you in this city, flee to another" (Mt. 10:23). St. John records Christ's own example: When the Jews took up stones to cast at him, "Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple" (Jn. 8:59). His hour had not yet come. St. Paul fled likewise from the Damascenes: "Through a window, in a basket I was let down by the wall and so escaped" (2 Cor. 11:33).

The error of Tertullian would clear the way for the false zeal of fanatics. In the presence of these extremes error is inevitable, except through a middle way out, and this cannot be on a common level. Hold your ground—always. Always flee. The middle position between such maxims is elevated. It is an apex, so to speak, above or over, as well as between them. Some there are who seek an oblique average, between the apex and the opposite extremes respectively; but since the extremes are errors, they acquire nothing beyond bootless floating at a moderate altitude; or rather, floating mediocrity. The policy goes by the name of opportunism, which is variable according to circumstances. It cannot be staunch truth.

³ Other pertinent documents of the 19th century are: *Mirari vos*, an encyclical of Pope Gregory XVI against the indifferentism of Lamennais (Denz. 1613); the encyclical, *Singulari quadam* of Pope Pius IX (Denz. 1642, 1646, 1677), and his *Quanta cura* (Denz. 1688 ff.).

occurs *per accidens*, what is circumstantial, what is disadvantageous in extremes, as the things to be shunned. It is a kind of negative prudence inspired by utilitarianism. It is the "prudence of the flesh," in sacred phraseology, a type of vacillating, personal politics that vary from one day to the next. The irregular oscillations that make it what it is, follow from lack of anchorage amidst changing circumstances, conceptually detached from guiding principles.

The leadership of St. Thomas promotes firmness, as we shall presently see. It offers the firmness of unshakable principles. It is leadership toward a goal, a definite end that must be reached. Contingent circumstances along the way are regulated deliberately by prudence with its accessories of caution and circumspection.

We are checking up on a very fine article of the *Summa*. There is no trace in it of a distinction between thesis and hypothesis. But there is unmistakable discernment between an absolute end and the exercise of free choice in gaining it as the aspirant makes progress toward it, through circumstances which, *per accidens*, may turn out in defiance of rule. Here is where prudence often has to forego comparisons with good, better, and best, while being forced into a solitary adjustment, preferring the less of two evils. This is quite different from habitually relegating sound teaching to the classroom, with never a fear or thought of it in action, where floating, if not frivolous hypotheses, ruin the day.⁴

Theological Proof (*Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 3, a. 2). St. Thomas' way is usually to climb from less important to more important considerations. This article is a good illustration; it builds to a climax. Positive precepts, being affirmative, are always binding, but they do bind "for always." Place, time, and other circumstances may limit their execution. The confession of faith, being an affirmative thing, falls *per se* under a positive precept only. Therefore, the confession of faith is an obligation for salvation, which becomes a duty at times and places, when or where its omission would deprive God of due honor or the neighbor of some compulsory advantage.

Supplemental considerations. What we have rendered as a deprivation for God or neighbor is denominated by St. Thomas a "subtraction." But as Sylvius and Billuart observe, in the premises the "subtraction" is more than purely negative. It is privative and contrary. It is no mere cessation in confessing. It is an omission that is injurious to God or that interferes with the tendering of honor to him in an important way, when

⁴ Cf. *De Revelatione*, II, chap. 15, p. 448.

due. It is culpable neglect. An offense of this kind is committed by a king or president who, when functioning officially, ignores received custom by deliberately refraining from introducing God's name in connection with solemn acts or from acknowledging that all power derives from God. Similarly, the frustration of the neighbor's advantage when it depends on the confession is a culpable injury.

Aquinas furnishes two examples of sinful failure to confess the faith: 1) Maintaining silence "when asked about one's faith, if one thereby runs the risk of causing the impression that he has no faith, or that faith is not true. 2) If others take occasion by the silence to turn away from the faith. In cases of this kind confession of the faith is a necessity for salvation."

As Billuart notes, all theologians rightly follow St. Thomas. Granting that the confession binds according to circumstances, no cases can be produced in which the observance would be more urgent than on the two occasions described by the Angelic Doctor. Imputability of guilt may vary between mortal and venial sins. Not even a venial sin is to be trifled with in this matter, lest the glory of God suffer thereby. This warning should carry especially with those whose priestly charges impose the propriety of always promoting God's glory.

Confirmation of this doctrine gains by the following solutions of objections resumed in the statement of the question:

1. Faith should be referred to the same end as charity. Therefore, whenever God's honor or the neighbor's welfare demands an outward confession of faith, it becomes obligatory, either grievously or slightly, according to circumstances.

2. It must not be thought that the obligation to confess the faith is restricted to those who teach the faith to others. When necessity arises, and faith is imperiled, every individual believer is called upon in conscience to make his faith known to others, either for their instruction or for the strengthening of their faith by example, or to repress infidels in their affronts.

If, on the contrary, the confession of faith incites unbelievers to stir up disturbance, it is no sign that conscientiousness in working out one's salvation imposes abstention. That would be erroneous in practice. The timidity would be imprudent. As it has been said: "We Catholics have already made such huge blunders, there is no new one we can fall into." Why succumb through fear?

But if the disturbance raised by infidels results from some manifesta-

tion of faith, indulged without profit either to the faith or to the individual believer—it is simply out of place or badly timed—the confession may be abstained from. It should not be omitted, however, if any reasonable advantage for another is hoped for; or if the confession is for the moment compulsory.

Prudent abstention from publicizing one's faith is inculcated by our Lord's vigorous warning: "Give not what is holy to dogs. Cast not your pearls before swine . . . lest they turn on you and tear you" (Mt. 7:6).

But intimidation was scorned by our Lord when the disciples reported that he had scandalized the pharisees by a lesson he had applied from purgation. "Let them go," he said, "they are blind and leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:12). Dominicans are especially called to be *Domini canes*, the Lord's pointers and watchdogs, who are not afraid to bark against the invasion of heretics. Their bark is a protest against mute camouflage, for heresy is robbery of the honor God deserves. Neither silent "scarecrowism" nor pusillanimity can be excused, when wolves devour. Foxes are as bad in smaller ways. Is it so that "biting and back-biting are against charity"? The watchdogs bark against "caritanism."

In practice there is a common difficulty in distinguishing accurately between true and false zeal. The infused gift of counsel may be necessary just as for the discernment between true and false humility, between true meekness and softness, lapsing into folly or worse.

Corollary I. Never in any case is it allowable, even in the face of death, to deny by word or deed the true faith kept in the heart; or to profess or simulate false faith outwardly.

This corollary is against the Helcesaites and Priscillianists.

Proof I: Our Lord's Word: "Him who shall deny me before men, I shall deny before my Father" (Mt. 10:32).

Proof II: Theological: To deny the faith is the same thing as to say: "God has revealed an untruth," or "God has not revealed the sacred dogmas of faith." Both denials amount to lies injurious to God and therefore are never lawful.⁵ Martyrdom would be preferable. Of it St. Thomas writes: "As a preparatory disposition of soul, martyrdom binds with the force of precept." Man ought to be ready in heart to die, "ready to be killed, rather than to deny Christ or commit a mortal sin." Our Lord's words belong in this perspective: "If one strike thee on the right

⁵ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodl.* 4, a. 20; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 124, a. 1 ad 3. Martyrdom is the right endurance of sufferings unjustly inflicted.

cheek, turn to him the other" (Mt. 5:39; Lk. 6:29). There may be no alternative in a death march to salvation, one's own or anybody else's.

As for keeping the faith in one's heart while denying it publicly, one would be acting a lie. Denying the faith outright would be a worse one. Lying, however, is a matter of speech. Acting out a lie goes by the name of simulation. Describe either as you wish, lying and simulation are sinful.

The prohibition to simulate false faith or to profess false faith openly is a consequence of the prohibition to deny the true faith which false faith opposes. Whoever orally calls himself or actually shows himself to be a Calvinist, is denying that he is a Catholic.

In pagan persecutions, certain governments tolerated the sale for money of certificates testifying that the bearers had sacrificed to idols—which at times was false. The certificates guaranteed immunity from penal torture. That was all certain weaker Christians bought them for. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Church, all purchasers were put down as denying the faith, inasmuch as the mere seeking of the certificates was equivalent to a profession of paganism.

A doubt. When or in what forms is the simulation or profession of false religion enacted?

In a general way, the deliberate employment of accepted signs, rites, or ceremonies, adopted to signify immediately that the user is making profession of some false religion, suffices. Historically the following signs have been authentically recorded: bending the knee before an idol; offering incense to a false god, in spite of an interior intention to honor a crucifix concealed within reach; wearing an image of Mohammed about the neck; participating with Calvinists in "the Lord's supper"; chanting psalms in non-Catholic temples; contracting matrimony before a heretical minister who blesses the marriage bond according to a rite peculiar to his sect. These procedures are never lawful. Their primary and characteristic purpose is to mark the profession of some false religion, to denote membership in a particular sect as distinct from other sects.

If outward gestures or insignia have no fixed, proper, or primary relationship with the false profession of faith, a necessity may arise in which the use of them becomes justifiable.

There may be a slant toward a false profession in what appears; but in the present hypothesis it is *per accidens*, indirect, and secondary. We refer to the adoption of pagan attire when sojourning among pagans:

long robes cut to the pagan pattern, for instance. The Turkish fez or turban might smack outwardly of Mohammedanism; and yet the traveling Catholic, donning the foreigner's apparel, while seeking a degree of privacy in masking his Christian identity, is himself moved only by expediency and at a time when he is not under fire in a persecution. Assuming that the garb has no exclusive, primary connection with religious membership or profession, its use is an accommodation to the people, or the nation, not to their false religion. There is concealment of one's own true faith, as being nobody else's affair, but concealment is not denial. Neither is it a proof of preference for a false religion.

St. Thomas makes an apt distinction between simulation and dissimulation. Simulation is equivalent to lying through a deed. It is a lie acted out. Its impact is positively to convince that something is, when it is not; or that something is not what it truly is. Dissimulation merely omits stating the truth. The mere concealment of truth may at times be lawful. Not to say that a thing is, is quite different from saying it is what it is not.⁶

Jehu, therefore (cf. 4 Kgs. 10:29-31), does not need to be excused from sin. His deceitful wickedness is established beyond doubt. The praise bestowed upon him by God was reputedly an earthly recompense for a particular deed, the destruction of the worship of Baal. But it did not condone his unbalanced zeal by putting a premium on his perverse attachment to other forms of idolatry.

Theologians commonly teach that association with heretics and infidels for civic or social advantages does not come under a ban when there is no danger of perversion; but as soon as active or passive connivance in religious practices begins to threaten, perversion is imminent. Such comportment induces the profession of a false religion, at least equivalently.

*Supplemental consideration.*⁷ Other things being equal, communication with infidels is more rigorously prohibited than with heretics. But in regions where Catholic inhabitants have been mingling with heretics for a long time, many things may be tolerated—as an escape from greater evils—which could not be approved of in places where heretics are getting the first foothold for the spreading of their errors.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 111, a. 1 ff. The distinction developed here under the title "De Simulatione," etc., seems beclouded in the English translation: "Of Dissimulation," etc. St. Thomas' distinction is respected in Webster's unabridged. See synonyms explained under Simulation.—Tr.

⁷ These insertions appear as footnotes in the original.

On the other hand, barring scandal or the undermining of faith, there need be no special harm in Catholics visiting non-Catholic places of worship, as tourists might; nor in attending marriages and funerals therein, as it were, by material presence only. They could not in conscience, however, participate actively in any external religious function, such as standing up for a bride or a groom. For a grave reason the holder of a governmental or civic office could appear "officially" on proper occasions. But *per se* it would not be lawful to frequent non-Catholic gatherings for the sake of listening to heretical preachers. Neither would it be allowable to read books condemned by Church authority, without special permission.

For the offsetting of major evils, many theologians agree, there is no need to disturb workmen who, without causing scandal or compromising religion in any way, gain a livelihood by taking jobs in the construction of non-Catholic churches, synagogues, mosques or pagan temples. Architects require great caution, however.

Corollary II. In opposition to Tertullian's belief, mere flight from persecution is not, *per se*, unlawful. It is not a denial of faith. Just the contrary, it is a virtual profession of faith. The motive of him who flees is to remain faithful, to run no risk of having a denial extorted from him under duress. One who runs away may be breaking with cherished laudable ambitions, as well as giving up his native land, possessions, and pleasurable life with relatives. Christ commended flight of the kind: "When they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another" (Mt. 10:23).

Per accidens, flight could be illicit, as in the case of a pastor whose people would need his care. The pastor is a shepherd; the people are his sheep. "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" in imitation of the Master (cf. Jn. 10:11, 15). *Per accidens* also, flight might be an obligation, as when the common welfare would depend on the safety of him who would thus survive.

Inquiry I: If one were personally on trial before an official magistrate, either publicly or privately, would he have to risk his life by making a forthright confession of faith?

Yes. Laxists were condemned for holding the opposite view (cf. Denz. 1168). Not only does the Gospel warn against being ashamed of Christ [in this or any other way], it also preserves the solemn precept which our Lord conveyed in these words: "They will deliver you up to

councils and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors and before kings, for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak" (Mt. 10:17). That being so, confession, not silence, is an obligation.

This stand of the Church was exemplified in the martyrs. When put to the torture by tyrants, they stood firm and confessed the faith valiantly. Temporal life they appraised as small loss or a small price to pay for what they gained. The union in mind with Prime Truth ought to be firmer than that of the soul with one's body.

Opponents retort. A tyrant has no right to interrogate wickedly. Therefore, no believer is bound to answer when he does. A defender may resort to falsity against him without contracting the guilt of lying. One lies only when denying a truth entitled to be made manifest.

Reply. First of all, lying must be defined correctly. To lie is to be unjust, but that is not all. The injustice is a direct departure from veracity, which it destroys (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 110).

In the next place, telling the truth is an act altogether independent of whether a tyrant is using rightly or abusing his autonomy. On the background of the article we are concerned with, the doctrine of St. Thomas is emphatic. Telling the truth by confessing the faith is a signal homage to God and a glowing tribute to faith. When it is done in the face of persecutors, the faithful grow stronger by it and souls are often converted from unbelief. The omission of the confession would produce the contrary effect. There would be an affront to divine majesty and souls weak in faith would be led to vacillate. It could happen that public authorities refrain from personal investigation. In that case, individual Christians would not be bound to volunteer it.

Supplementary explanation. A precept launched against the faithful in general could be put down as too vague to bind individuals seriously. From their failure to comply with it, their disobedience would not authorize conclusions to the effect that they are not Christians or that Christianity is not true. There is no detraction from God's honor, no jeopardizing of the faith.

A case in hand would be this. A heretical official or magistrate decrees that all Catholics should be identified by wearing a particular costume or badge. Such a law could be conscientiously ignored and there would be no obligation to make oneself known because of it. There would be too much vagueness in the law itself. Even infidels

would admit it. None of the ancient persecutors resorted to such a soft way of singling out Christians.

Inquiry II. If one were privately interrogated, and only as affecting a private matter, would the admission of one's faith be an obligation? Example: A Catholic administrator is accosted by a fellow: "Are you a Mason? If you are, we can work together more familiarly."

Reply. *Per se* and barring scandal, there need be no express admission of one's religion in such a case. The question could be sidetracked: "What difference does it make? That is my affair." By assuming a non-committal attitude, there would be no detriment to God's honor and no danger of damaging the neighbor's virtue. As for timidity or shame in confessing Christ, no sin is committed by silence or evasion, except insofar as an actual obligation exists to do otherwise. On general principle, however, it is better to affirm one's faith fearlessly when occasions arise, be reasons for hesitancy what they may. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, counsel and fortitude, would operate in these cases. If the gifts are necessary for salvation, it is because the use of them actually promotes it.

Inquiry III. If the Holy Eucharist or a crucifix were trampled upon, would a witness have to speak out against it?

Reply. Certainly, just as soon as the sacrilege could be hindered. God's honor and the neighbor's salvation would make interference compulsory.

Here ends the treatise on the external act of faith.

QUESTION FOUR

The Virtue of Faith

Introduction

Having treated of the object of faith, of interior and external acts of faith, we now take up the habit which constitutes faith as a virtue. It is from faith as a habit that acts of faith issue. It is faith as a virtue that gains its specification from the formal object we have endeavored to identify and to expound correctly and precisely.

St. Thomas furnishes the following fourfold treatment of phases involved in the *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, Questions Four to Seven, re-

spectively: (1) faith itself as a virtue; (2) possessors of the gift of faith; (3) the cause of faith; (4) the effects of faith. The effects are God-fearingness and the purification of the heart. This arrangement provides an examination of all those things that bear on faith *per se*, from four distinct angles.

The Angelic Doctor's Question Four is the most direct. The content of its eight articles matches what we list here in three parts.

Part I: What is faith? Through what faculty does it work? (A. 1, 2.)

Part II: On the relation between faith and charity (A. 3). Is charity the form of faith? (A. 4.) Is there a numerical difference between faith formed and unformed or are they both the same? (A. 5.) They cannot be one and the same virtue, accurately speaking. None but living faith, animated by charity, is a virtue in the proper sense (A. 6). Is all faith one and the same thing?

Part III: On the relation between faith and the other virtues (A. 7). In virtue of its origin, faith is prior to hope and charity. Its grade is higher than that of hope and the moral virtues, but lower than that of charity (A. 8). Absolutely speaking, faith excels in certitude over the intellectual virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Article 1

Is It Fitting to Define Faith as the "Substance of Things to Be Hoped for, the Evidence of Things That Appear Not" (Heb. 11:1)

Statement of the question. A denial has been alleged for the following reasons: 1) Being a theological virtue, faith is a quality, not a substance. 2) Diversity in the object alone engenders diversity in virtue. Therefore, whatever is hoped for has to be an object of hope. 3) Since charity is the form of (living) faith, it were better said that faith is the substance of things to be loved, than things to be hoped for. 4) Substance and evidence, however, are terms not interchangeable at discretion, nor even at all. They do not belong to the same genus. 5) The very nature of evidence is perspicuity in what is seen. Evidence makes truth manifest. How can things that appear not be manifest? No wonder Erasmus said: "These words are a eulogy of faith, not a definition."

First conclusion. The inspired terms of St. Paul were not framed to serve as a scholastic definition. Nevertheless, they form a descriptive definition encompassing all elements that enter into a specific definition of faith.

Proof from Tradition. It has been a general custom among the Fathers of the Church and the councils that imitated them, to cite the Apostle's words as an unquestionable definition of theological faith. The First Vatican Council falls in line (cf. Denz. 1789). The context of the epistle (Heb. 11:1) neutralizes the erroneous claim of Erasmus which would substitute trust or confidence for faith, on the grounds that St. Paul is here praising the faith without any intention of defining it. The case parallels several others which we enumerated at the beginning of this treatise. Call it fidelity, veracity, confidence, or conscience—all are deviations from the traditional conviction, the only one compatible with the context, namely, that St. Paul had here clearly in mind the theological virtue of faith.

Theological Proof. St. Thomas observes a complex procedure. It is as if with a Euclidian instinct he were constructing a many-sided polygon within a circle, only to report that the increasing periphery always measures short of the circumference. It is a beautiful illustration of the abiding inequality between a simple idea or mental concept and its complex accouterment in articulate or written speech.

In a word, there is no question in St. Paul of the persuasiveness inherent in a demonstration that is objectively conclusive. There is nothing of the syllogistic in his definition. But there is an explanatory unfolding of an idea through comparisons that override a cleavage in genera, and which carry conviction in virtue of their unifying inductive force. We have denominated this procedure as explicative. It is not illative objectively; and yet it may be said to be subjectively illative, insofar as the rules of logic admit the validity of the reasoning. In default of demonstrative force, however, it lacks a property that characterizes logical deductions.

An attentive reading of the article by Aquinas shows that there are three syllogisms enfolded in the inspired passage. Their principal trend is the following.

Since faith is a habit, its definition ought to bring out the relationship between its own distinctive act and object. But to exercise faith by believing in things that are unseen is an act of the intellect focused on a determinate unit by command of the will. Therefore, faith involves a twofold element requiring a twofold definition. On the one hand, there

is the factor demanding action toward the object that is willed—which object must figure as an end that is good. In this direction, faith is the “substance of things to be hoped for.” On the other hand, the intellect tends only toward grasping what is true. This justifies the defining of faith as the “evidence of things that appear not.”

Both parts of this conclusion may be clarified. It is quite right for St. Paul to lay down in the first place the relation of faith to the object of the will as its end. Since faith is a theological virtue, its object and end are identical, namely, Prime Truth unseen. But Prime Truth unseen, in being simultaneously an end, becomes automatically an object of hope: “We hope for that which we see not” (Rom. 8:25). It follows that the relationship ordaining faith to its end is correctly expressed in the first part of the Pauline declaration: “Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for.”

“Substance” is a term applied to whatever first constitutes a thing in the order of being. Axioms or initial principles that govern science by virtually encompassing it, are regarded as the substance of science. In this sense, faith is the first supernatural beginning of things hoped for, which things are summed up as “eternal life.” It is the basis of Christian hope and charity. No goal of the kind could move the will, without being made known, in order to be believed in advance.¹

The second part of St. Paul’s definition, with equal rectitude, brings out the relation of faith to its intellectual object. The Latin term *argumentum*, rendered “evidence,” conveys what matures in the intellect through faith, that is, a firm adherence through assent.

In believing mysteries, truths that do not become apparent in themselves, the motive force is the authority of God revealing. It is the divine authority that functions as an *argumentum* or equivalently as evidence. Therefore, St. Paul’s definition is valid, even though the arrangement of terms is not in scholastic form.

Second conclusion. Since scholastic form would require a proximate genus and ultimate differential to develop a specific definition, St. Paul’s doctrine, which involves a remote genus also, may be standardized as follows.

Faith is a habit of the mind—remote genus—which is the beginning of eternal life within us and which causes the intellect to assent to truths that are not apparent.

¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Heb. 11:1*; *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2 ad 9.

The beginning of "eternal life" is a habit *per se* infused. It is the proximate genus from which the ultimate differential of assent proceeds. There is an increase of precision when the formal motive of specification is introduced, to round out the perfection of the definition. The fuller formula would run thus:

Faith is a divinely infused virtue under whose influence the intellect assents firmly to whatever God reveals, precisely on account of God's authority in revealing.

The Vatican Council spreads out analytically what St. Paul's asseveration transmits (Denz. 1789). "Faith is a supernatural virtue by which, thanks to God's secretly assistant grace, we believe that whatever things have been revealed by God are true—not because the natural insight of reason has penetrated the truth intrinsic to the things themselves, but because of God's own authority as revealer. God cannot be deceived nor can he deceive. We make our own the testimony of the Apostle: 'Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that do not appear' " (Heb. 11:1) (Denz. 1789).²

The position derives additional strength from reflections that are now in order.

1. Faith stands forth in relief as distinct from all other intellectual appurtenances. a) Being the substance of things to be hoped for, it is unlike human faith which, *per se*, has no connection with eternal beatitude. b) Its infallible evidence places it incomparably above and beyond wobbling opinion, suspicion, and doubt. c) Since its true mysteries are veiled, so as never to grow apparent, it is different from science, and different also from the understanding of self-evident or first principles.

2. All other definitions of faith are but the outgrowth of St. Paul's inspired one. Emphasis grows from the testimonies of holy writers: St. Augustine: "Faith is the virtue by which we believe truths that are not seen"; Damascene: "The assent of faith is unquestioning, in spite of the obscurity inherent in what is believed"; Dionysius: "Faith is the permanent mental substructure for believers. It shows truth to the faithful after building them spiritually in truth." What is that but to make of faith the "substance of things that are not apparent" in themselves? ³ The word "substance" has been styled a mystic hyperbole on the grounds that infused faith is indeed the beginning of "life eternal," but in a way that escapes our grasp. We are compelled, therefore, to

² Paragraph on the First Vatican Council is from a footnote in the Latin original.

³ Cf. St. Augustine, in *Joan.*, St. John near the middle of treatise 40; Damascene, *De Fide orthodoxa*, IV, chap. 11; Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 7.

adopt this exaggeration, borrowed from material substances, in somewhat the same way as we classify all creatures as nothings compared with the infinite God.

Hugh of St. Victor expatiates: "Faith is that certitude with which the spirit embraces the truth of absent things that lie between the poles of science and opinion. It endows them, so to speak, with evidence, the reason that convinces without the need of their appearing."

3. Still further emphasis accrues from the solution of the difficulties advanced in the beginning.

a) St. Paul's use of the term "substance" is metaphorical. His concept is that of anything that may be of first importance in kind. It is the same way in which we speak of the substance of Thomistic doctrine.

b) The object of hope is not improperly introduced by St. Paul, since the act of faith, being commanded by the will, must be conducive to the end that is hoped for.

c) The object of hope must be attainable and not as yet attained. It is therefore imbedded correctly in the definition of faith. But "things loved" may be already seen, if not possessed—and that fact would exclude them as objects of faith. Charity is superior and not subordinate to faith and hope.

d) The significance of the terms "substance" and "evidence" in the Pauline application has nothing to do with a generic cleavage in the faith defined, but only with a twofold relationship of the simple act of faith with objects that have to be diversified because they correspond to diverse faculties. Substance is the good thing that dominates the will. Evidence is the true thing that subdues the intellect.

e) Demonstrative argumentation is a device that makes an obscure thing clear. It confers evidence. But divine authority identifies and protects the truth of obscure mysteries, without bestowing on them any of the evidence which it possesses within itself.⁴

Aquinas leaves no doubt that the gift of faith is supernatural in its substance and not merely in the mode of its production, as happens with a miracle or a prophecy concerning future contingencies in the order of nature.

In treating of truth (*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2) St. Thomas, while explaining St. Paul's definition of faith, shows the difference and subordination governing man's two distinct ultimate ends, the natural and the

⁴ St. Thomas evolves this doctrine in *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2. He applies it in his commentary on Heb. 11:1.

supernatural. "Man's ultimate end is twofold," he states explicitly. In the supernatural order it is eternal life, concerning which we have it on St. Paul's authority: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has conceived the things God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Aquinas comments here: "Nothing can be ordained to an end without having within itself beforehand, a definite proportion to the end." From the proportionateness spring adaptability to the end and desire for the end. That foregoing necessity justifies treating the thing ordained as though it were a beginning of the end. The law of appetite is at work herein. An appetite is not stirred except by something it likes, that is, something like what one already has in mind. Such a thing satisfies. Therefore, in human nature itself one finds the beginning of whatever good is proportionate to it. The habit of "first principles," so called, which embraces the principles on their first presentation, springs partly from human nature itself. . . . In parallel fashion, for man to be ordained unto life eternal there must be some preliminary adjustment in man, to whom eternal life is promised. But eternal life consists in the full acquaintanceship with God. As our Lord testifies: "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God" (Jn. 17:3). This being true, there has to be a corresponding beginning of this supernatural knowledge in expectant man. It comes in the form of faith, which is wholly dependent on infused light for its assent to truths, above and beyond the reach of natural knowing.

Supplemental consideration. Blondel appealed to this reasoning to show, as it were, on the authority of St. Thomas, that human nature embodies in itself the beginning of supernatural life. This would be more than the commonly admitted obediential potency justifies. It would postulate an objective elevation to the supernatural state. The kinship of this doctrine is too close to the condemned teaching of Baius, which clung to the efficacy of purely natural desire in originating grace. St. Thomas stands against it in the article we are following.⁵

The Angelic Doctor devotes attention to the solution of fifteen objections, the axis of his thought being this: The objectors fail to grasp how and why faith, to be supernatural in its substantial character, requires a supernatural formal object or motive. It is not enough for it merely to be produced supernaturally, as a prophecy about future contingent occurrences in human history. To claim that faith is no different in kind and species from a prediction about the termination of a historic

⁵ This footnote (in the original) gains its force from *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2.

war, is to follow Scotus, Molina, and the nominalists. Indeed, all upholders of such a position become nominalists in reality, whether they recognize their plight or not.

In elucidating the definition of St. Paul, on which we have been dwelling, St. Thomas declares unequivocally that the "principles of knowledge are the substance of knowledge," thereby illustrating the master-thought of St. Paul: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). If geometry constituted the essence of beatitude, once an aspirant were to assimilate the principles of geometry he might correctly be accredited with having acquired the substance of beatitude. The similarity convinces. Faith is, in some sense, a beginning of eternal life for the intellect. Charity is the same for the will. But charity, like faith, is essentially supernatural.

Among mystic writers who have expounded this doctrine most beautifully, after Dionysius, rank Tauler, in broadcasting his specialty called "naked faith," and St. John of the Cross. We ourselves have incorporated the teaching into a work devoted to Christian perfection and contemplation.⁶

Throughout his exposition, St. John of the Cross is partial to the pair of clauses put together by St. Paul in his inspired definition.

1. "The substance of things to be hoped for" is possessed through infused contemplation. The contemplation is an act of faith enriched with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, through the gifts of understanding and wisdom. It is a foretaste or normal preparation for beatific vision. As contemplative faith, it is penetrative and unctuous. It is a forerunner of divine secrets, sweetened by them in advance: "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is" (Ps. 33:9). The experience was alluded to six times over by our Lord who, speaking in the present, embraced both past and future when he declared: Whoever "believes in me [actually], has eternal life." Eternal life has [already] begun within him (cf. Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).

2. St. John of the Cross is just as insistent in extolling faith as the "evidence of things that do not appear." He maintains that the more exalted faith becomes, the more darkening it grows. This is due to its penetration of the dazzling blindingness or transluminous blackness

⁶ Tauler's "naked faith" is scattered through his sermons and is expounded in a compendium of his teaching produced by his disciples under the title *Institutiones*. St. John of the Cross is an admirable exponent of faith's reality in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, chap. 8, and all through the dark or obscure night, especially Book II, chap. 2; cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Perfection Chrétienne et Contemplation*, I, pp. 77 ff.

identified with the "inaccessible light in which God abides" (1 Tm. 6:16). This sublime obscurity is a whole universe away from mental foggy, absurdity, and incoherence. It hails from light so excessive that weak human sight cannot bear it. But what cannot at present be borne, the Holy Spirit will show in due course (cf. Jn. 16:12-13).

No wonder that St. Teresa professed to believe "in mysteries, with a devotedness all the stronger in proportion as the mysteries were more obscure." She was envisaging, not to say experiencing, the profound secrecy affecting predestination, eternal punishment, and the conciliation of the two. Aristotle furnished an analogous rational key: Truths that rank among the highest of intelligibles turn out to be the least intelligible within the scope of human horizons. No known example can be produced better than the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity.

Accordingly, there is little of the marvelous, in spite of its sublimity, in the attestation of St. John of the Cross that infused Christian faith is of a much higher excellence than supernatural visions of the sensitive and imaginative brands, especially when the visions bear only on creatures. Furthermore, the quest of such visions is to be held in abhorrence, for it pulls the soul away from the very laudable desire of true contemplation that feeds on the mysteries of faith.

The sense of the Pauline definition of faith is penetrated profoundly by mystical theology only. In the mystical perspective, our faith, notwithstanding its obscurity, is superior to the natural knowledge of the highest sovereign angel, and of all other angels created and creatable.

Briefly, cognition is either essentially supernatural or essentially natural. Essentially supernatural cognition attains to beatific vision, beginning with infused faith. Essentially natural cognition, being wholly inferior to the supernatural, may be possessed either by angelic spirits or human reason.

Article 2

Does Faith Operate Subjectively in the Intellect as Its Proper Faculty?

Statement of the question. [Apart from the affirmative claim, denials fall into three groups: 1) Faith operates subjectively only through the

will. 2) Faith is rooted conjointly in the intellect and the will. 3) Spurious explanations are bound to follow from spurious definitions of faith. —Tr.]

1. St. Augustine says expressly: "The faith of believers is anchored in the will." Other views argue that the assent of faith is dictated by the will's obedience to God. Faith is not located either in the speculative or the practical intellect: not in the speculative, which does not admit precepts into its content, for faith issues precepts that have to be observed; nor in the practical, which is engaged exclusively with contingencies in acting or producing. Faith is an indispensable necessity maintaining right relationship with God.

2. St. Thomas refers to certain Augustinian scholastics, his contemporaries, who contended that faith operates subjectively from the intellect and will in equal balance.¹ The equalness was ignored by Victorinus, for whom faith is exercised predominantly by the affective faculty. Still others held out for the practical intellect, which arouses affectiveness and controls it. But the cause of these divergent views lay in the apparent failure of their authors to understand the practical intellect itself.

3. Most Protestants hold that faith is in the will, consistently with their erroneous definition of faith as substantial trust in divine mercy for the remission of each one's sins. Trust, however, is reducible to hope, which indeed is in the will; rather, it is a robust degree of hope, as we shall show later. Modernists place faith in the practical intellect. Liberal Protestants regard faith as nothing more than a cultural religious sense, a sort of refined sensibility rather than a strictly intellectual endowment. Such faith is synonymous with sheer sentimentalism, of which J. J. Rousseau is a competent exponent.

Of the five conclusions which we here present, the first four concern faith whether living or dead, whether informed by charity or not. The fifth has to do with perfect faith only, that is, faith animated by charity.

First conclusion. Faith is in the intellect as in its proper subject.

Pauline Proof. "We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then, face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12). But sight of this kind is in the intellect. Therefore, faith too is in the intellect. Furthermore, since nothing can be willed without being known in advance, there can be no hope or charity functioning supernaturally in the will without supernatural faith in the intellect to guide it.

¹ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4.

Theological Proof. There is correlation between act and habit in the same subject. But believing is an act belonging immediately to the intellect, since its object is the true. Hence, the habit of faith, in being the proper principle of the act of belief, is also in the intellect as its subject.

The major applies clearly to the interior and primary act of faith. We are not considering here the exterior or secondary act, the vocalized confession of faith. This proceeds from a different faculty.

The minor is obvious. The act of faith is an assenting not merely to the true, but to Prime Truth which governs all truth universally (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 1).

Second conclusion (*ibid.*, ad 3). Faith is in the speculative intellect as its subject. The speculative intellect is for necessary or absolute truth. It does not house contingent or operative truths. But faith's first object is Prime Truth unchangeable and necessary, superior to all subordinate operative truths. Our source (*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4) emphasizes the practical inoperativeness of Prime Truth because "it is uncreated." Faith in it has to be in the speculative intellect.

Third conclusion (*loc. cit.*). It is only by extension that faith becomes practical. Prime Truth, which is the object of faith, is the goal of all desires and deeds in the Christian life. This is why faith is said to "operate through love." The extension of faith through love amounts to an extension of the speculative intellect into the practical. The idea is borrowed from Aristotle. Understanding is no longer restricted to *ens* or being. It reaches forth to the good by loving. Speculatively we believe in Prime Truth. Practically we believe also in precepts and counsels. As we shall show hereafter, the infused gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge are for the most part speculative and contemplative. That does not prevent them from stretching out and developing practical results.²

Fourth conclusion (*loc. cit.*). Faith is in the speculative intellect in such a way as to be put in motion, exercised, and specified by the will. Its act is free. There is no visible object to control or dominate it.

Supplemental considerations. They who locate faith in the practical intellect define that potency as one that develops affectiveness or is bent by affectiveness or is drawn toward action. These three things are verified in faith. But the practical intellect cannot be identified by what goes before or follows its action. Its specification needs to be characterized by a consistent object that is permanent. That metaphysical

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 3; q. 9, a. 3; q. 45, a. 3.

object which makes it practical is its own operativeness, which must be transitive either by empowering things or by producing them. The speculative intellect is intransitive. Should transitivity develop from it, by way of influx into something other than itself, a work has been enacted through the medium of the practical intellect. New relations are acquired with new works effected; but the relations as such could not issue from the speculative intellect without the motor-like medium in action between them. Therefore, they could not alter its genus, as speculative. Their connection with affectiveness alleged as being either antecedent or subsequent, simply does not count, except as extrinsic conditions *sine qua non*. For, unless one were drawn affectively to like contemplative or other forms of speculative understanding, there would be no such thing as intellectual delight. Nothing could be more contrary to what the Philosopher lays down in his *Ethics* (Bk. X, chaps. 7-8), namely, that the "purest form of delight is experienced in the act of the speculative intellect rejoicing over truth."³

Returning to the treatise of St. Thomas on truth, we find a confutation of the theory that faith is rooted equally in the intellect and in the will. You cannot have "one and the same habit residing equally in two distinct potencies. There has to be a subordination of part to part in some way, if the habit overlaps. That is what occurs in the case of faith." Without an adjustment of this kind, order and unity would vanish. Order is a unification imposing the right arrangement of relationships that may be styled "before-and-after." Its problems are those of priority and sequence. But in all coordination, there must be a subordination to some principle governing right order.

Now, it is not right to identify the will as a subject of faith. It is clearly the cause of faith, for one is free to believe or not to believe; and when one decides to believe, the will commands (the intellect) to elicit its act of faith.

Up to the present, our conclusions, four in number, apply to faith, either living through charity or lifeless through sin. Dead faith is barred in what follows.

Fifth conclusion. For an act of faith to be perfect two habits are required to operate conjointly: one in the intellect, the other in the will. The habit in the will is charity. The perfection of any act that issues from two principles operating together demands perfection in each of the operating principles. But to believe is an act of the intellect moved to yield its assent by the will. Both intellect and will, therefore,

³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, X, chaps. 7-8; St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4.

must individually have a perfection furnished by a habit peculiar to each. These habits are faith in the intellect and charity in the will.

This conclusion is to be understood with exactness. It regards an act of faith that is absolutely perfect from every angle, such an act as proceeds connaturally and gently from both potencies, intelligence and will, in a truly meritorious manner. If there were only a question of perfect infallible assent, the firm adhesion of the mind to revealed truth would suffice, for that could spring solely from a devout disposition in a will devoid of the habit of charity. It is what happens among the faithful who live in mortal sin, yet who do not forfeit, by that condition, the gift of infused hope. In Article 4 we shall bring up the matter under the heading of "unformed faith."

The solution of the first and second objections corroborates our principal or first conclusion, as against all those who make faith distinctively an affair of the will. Protestants and Modernists alike concur in so doing.

1. The appeal to St. Augustine's words, that "the faith of believers is lodged in their will," is myopic. The saint is merely referring to the freedom, not to will, while willing that the intellect should assent to whatever merits to be believed.

2. To will promptly to obey God when he reveals is good, but it falls short of faith. Faith requires in addition that the intellect itself be pliant in its disposition to heed the will's command. The case is comparable to the self-mastery of those whose concupiscence is kept invariably subject to the virtuous dictates of reason. There would be no need of the habit of prudence in the reasoning faculty in the absence of a habit of temperance or chastity in the carnal appetite. For that matter, chastity itself, before developing into a state or habit of virtue, evolves from continency or self-containment in the will, which indeed opposes degrading desires, but is not properly speaking a virtue.⁴

Corollary against the Modernists. We owe God homage, not of the will only, but also of the intellect. Apart from the promptness admitted in obeying God when he reveals, the intellect should be kept so well disposed as to tender homage of itself, not merely in its practical deportment, where divine precepts are weighed for execution through will-action, but chiefly in its speculative division, which Prime Truth invades with the magnetizing obscureness of mystery. This latter homage was denied theoretically and practically by the Modernists who defended the absolute autonomy and independence for reason (cf.

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 155, aa. 1, 3.

Denz. 2026). "The doctrines of faith," so they maintained, "should be adhered to with practical sense. They are perceptive norms of conduct. They need not be heeded in believing." Dogmas of faith fashion concepts for deportment, apart from which they are worthless teaching. Whether you are a believer or not, be sure to "keep the same attitude toward Jesus that you would toward God himself."

At an earlier period, the First Vatican Council had condemned the utter autonomy which Kant had formulated for reason. "If anybody says that human reason is so independent that faith cannot be commanded of it by God, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 1810). In a correlated chapter preceding, the orthodox background was explained. "Since man is wholly dependent upon God as his Creator and Lord, and since created reason is intimately subjected to uncreated Truth, we are bound by faith to offer to God revealing the plenitude of homage and obedience on the part of intelligence and will" (Denz. 1789). In opposition to Protestants, this declaration leaves no doubt about the intellectual element in faith.

Closing corollary. The homage tendered to God by the intellect in making an act of divine faith increases in merit according to the measure of the purely intellectual excellence activated in assenting through the habit of faith, not only in the practical intellect, but also in the speculative. To illustrate: It was a beautiful scene, that of the humble shepherds going over to Bethlehem to adore Jesus, newly born. The arrival of the magi was more beautiful. But of exceeding beauty was the homage of Platonic wisdom, supernaturalized in the person of Augustine, and of Aristotelian wisdom, in the person of Thomas. Like the shepherds, Augustine and Thomas approached the infant humbly. They afterwards employed their genius in drawing out the hidden mysteries of Christ's infancy. This intellectual homage was most beautiful. It repaired, in its measure, the injury done to God through atheism, agnosticism, and indifferentism—to say nothing of the proclamation of untouchable independence, claiming absolute aloofness for human reason, come what may to the teachings of faith.

In other words, God has a right to the diversified homage of the will, as ordained to what is good; of the practical intellect, as ordained to workable truth; and high above all, of the speculative intellect, ordained to intelligible being or *ens*—wherefore, being or *ens*, radiant with the highest sovereign and universal principles beaming all through creation, owes God the humble testimony of worship, the veneration of

faith due to him as Prime Truth. This supernatural worship ceases to regard the human difficulties growing out of the principle of non-contradiction applied to the Trinity and Incarnation, as well as all other principles that seem to be set at naught by predestination and eternal punishment. All mysteries whatever, if only they be revealed, are unhesitatingly embraced on account of the authority of Prime Truth that communicates them.

This homage to God grows all the more beautiful when the intelligence of the believing theologian is more exquisite. As St. Thomas advanced in virtue and years, his grand *Summa theologiae*—and virtually all he had written—impressed him as so much straw or rubbish, almost nothing.

Supplemental consideration. Depreciation of this humble kind would be a travesty if expressed by an underling in intelligence, or a fool. St. Thomas was superior to his work and stood high above it, looking down on it. Aristotle might similarly have said, "Metaphysics has no usefulness." A workaday listener could then have congratulated him smartly on "waking up." [Thomas, however, was viewing a created masterpiece, as it were, in the uncreated light of God's word.—Tr.]

The amplitude of faith causes nobility and servitude in the believer. Human paradoxes of the kind are common and commended. Slavery and military excellence have been praised by a French author, Alfred de Vigny, as matching in a soldier. Humility and magnanimity effect a mutual balancing in character. Eminent theologians appear to have excelled in both these virtues, the more they progressed in sober pious search for the most fruitful intelligence of holy mysteries. It could be ascribed as a maxim to the speculative intellect: "To serve God is to reign."

The service of God involves the freedom of a holy servitude.⁵ How can that be? St. Thomas distinguishes two kinds of servitude. First, there is the servitude of sin, which is crude slavery, though the world calls it freedom. Secondly, there is servitude or enslavement to God which is real liberty for the "sons of God." To enlarge upon these paradoxes would invite a treatment of humility and magnanimity in themselves and in their relations with other virtues, particularly faith.

Résumé of Article 2. 1. Faith is lodged in the intellect because its concern is for the true. 2. Its root is in the speculative intellect, for the

⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 183, a. 4.

truth which is its object is necessary and not of the contingent or workable grade. 3. Faith grows practical by an extension. It has a secondary purpose; namely, to effect the direction of human acts toward an ultimate goal. 4. Faith is so anchored in the speculative intellect as to receive its specification and motivation from the will. This has to be, because the truth of faith is obscure and insufficient of itself to move the intellect objectively. 5. A double habit is necessary for the perfection that makes faith meritorious. The habit of charity must be operative in the will, enlivening the directive influx exerted on the habit of faith in the intellect.

Article 3

Is Charity the Form of Faith?

Statement of the question. A negative answer would be based on the following claims: 1) Charity and faith are distinct virtues, specified as they must be, each by a form of its own. 2) Faith is in the intellect; charity is in the will. Therefore, they cannot coalesce in simple unity, such as would result from the permeation by a form of the totality which it informs. 3) Since it is the will that activates the intellect, as a principle in believing, faith is more a matter of obedience than of charity. Hence the zeal of St. Paul in propagating "obedience to the faith among all peoples" (Rom. 1:5).

Conclusion. Charity is the form by which faith is made perfect; not, however, in the sense of an intrinsic essential form.

Scriptural Proof. The authority of St. Paul: "In Christ Jesus . . . faith works through charity" (Gal. 5:6). But everything acts through its own form thereby communicating a share in its own peculiar determination. Consequently, the love that is of charity permeates faith as a special form.

The Council of Trent leaves no room for doubting. It is most explicit. Without being conjoined with hope and charity, faith does not effect perfect union with Christ. Neither does it turn a believer into a living member of Christ. That is why it is said most truly that "faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:17), and idle, and that "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any worth, apart from faith that works through charity" (Denz. 800).¹

¹ Council of Trent, sess. 6, chap. 7 (Denz. 800). Cf. Jas. 2:17; Gal. 5:6; 6:15.

Theological Proof. St. Thomas furnishes two factors for this argument:² 1) Charity is not an intrinsic or essential form of faith. The intrinsic or essential form of faith or of any operative habit, ordains it directly toward its own specific object. But the intrinsic formal factor of faith is embodied in its definition, which runs thus: Faith is an infused virtue, by which we believe the things revealed by God, on account of God's own authority. In this way faith receives its specification from Prime Truth.³ 2) Charity is an extrinsic and accidental form of faith, inasmuch as the act of faith is perfected by it, in order to become meritorious.

The reason lies in charity's function, which is to ordain to one's last end, namely, to the goal of charity itself, all other virtues that are subordinate to it. Among them ranks faith, both in habit and action. As a consequence, the act of faith when dictated by charity or, as we say, when performed out of love, is not only salutary, it gains or increases merit before God. The circumstance is a key to the admonition of St. James: "Faith without works is dead" [—and works without charity are dead]. It accounts for the adage first formulated by St. Paul: "Faith works through love," when it is meritorious. The permeation by charity equips faith with a double specification: one, from the object of faith itself, Prime Truth; the other, from the end of charity which is Sovereign Good.

Solution to objections. 1. Although charity is an accidental form of all virtues that are meritorious, St. Thomas saw a special reason for calling attention to it regarding faith. "The just man lives by faith," says Holy Scripture. This statement marks the eminence of faith over all other virtues. It is the foundation supporting an edifice of virtue. It is what counts first in the spiritual organism, since nothing can be desired supernaturally without being known about in advance through faith.

It is all important, therefore, that faith be living and not lifeless. It gets its meritorious life from charity. Hope also may be either living or dead. This distinction, of biblical origin, has become common lore among theologians. All admit it for faith and hope—not however for infused moral virtues.

Moral virtues serve only as means in the attainment of the ultimate end. For the supernatural ultimate end, charity suffices and is the indispensable necessity. Let charity fail and the supernatural moral vir-

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 3.

³ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5 ad 4, 7.

tues collapse. They cease to be infused. They do not even exist in the absence of infused charity. Charity alone supplies the efficacious intent to reach the supernatural ultimate, by saving one's soul.

Our Lord insisted habitually on the need of a living faith to guarantee the possession of life eternal. Life eternal was not envisaged by him as beginning at death, nor as mysteriously veiled in the future. He repeatedly coupled it with infused living faith, to be pursued and possessed in the present. What clearer words could He have used? "He who believes in me has everlasting life."⁴ He "shall not taste death forever" (Jn. 11:26). The state of grace is eternal life begun. It is the embryo, the normal "seed," that matures in glory. It is the Christ-life designated by St. Paul as identified with Christ himself "indwelling through faith in hearts" (Eph. 3:17). The Angelic Doctor commends: "It is Christ the divine Word who resides in the just man and not Christ as a man, to speak rigorously. Nevertheless, God's personal Word uses his humanity as a physical instrument and cause of every grace that is bestowed on a just man. It is in this mystery of union with Christ our head, that the faithful, as his members, received the personal influx of the Word made flesh within their bodies" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10).

2. In the analysis of living faith, St. Thomas dilutes the difficulty that is worded this way: "How can one and the same act proceed from two habits that are specifically distinct?" Aquinas is direct. There is nothing to prevent the same act from containing sundry forms when the forms themselves are so coordinated that, through them, the act may be reducible, under different aspects, to their respective species. The species discernible in living faith is related to different measures, the true and the good. The first is the object of faith, as faith. The other is of charity that permeates faith in ordaining it toward its ultimate goal.

The principle applies equally to different forms of malice in the same sinful act. One who steals in order to commit adultery is thief and adulterer; but adulterer more than thief. But one who commits adultery as an easy way to steal, is more thief than adulterer, while being both.⁵

In the realm of infused contemplation, Cajetan indicates more wholesome examples. He points out that the initial ingredient affects its substance, which is a form of infused faith. To it are added a measure of penetrativeness through the infused gift of understanding and

⁴ John 3:15, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 20:31.

⁵ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae q. 18, aa. 6-7; q. 56, a. 2.

a form that stimulates spiritual relish, through wisdom. The result of these fusions is to produce a keen compenetrative savoriness, which creates a special insight. It virtually gives eyes to faith. This explains the inspired invitation to spiritual aspirants, which describes the conscious experience of contemplatives: "Taste and see for the Lord is sweet."⁶

3. Vicious circle psychology again comes to the fore among opponents. In an act of faith, how can the will receive specification from the intellect which it is itself specifying?

The priority of intellect to will and will to intellect is of two different kinds.⁷ The intellect precedes the will in the matter of receiving the object which it proposes for free acceptance or rejection. Nothing can be formally willed without first becoming known, and an object known is perceived by being received in some way or other into the knowing faculty. But once an action or motion is in question, the will takes the lead. The intent to become or to do what is good stirs the will first, and as a consequence the character of the good to be acquired or achieved stamps its own species on the faculty aroused to pursue it. What faith presents as true is good, the mind sees. And the good which charity loves is the truth of promises divine, which are so apprehended that the will reaches forth to capture their captivation freely, through the intellect.

In a parallel manner, at the close of deliberative reasoning, the final thing chosen decisively, by way of judgment, has a twofold specification, each one being prior to the other in different senses. The formal motive of the decision or ultimate judgment is one thing. The choice or preference which stops at it and formally makes it an ultimate is another. They are compenetrative forms, which match each other according to the axiom: Causes that are mutually interactive need to be formally of different kinds.

Relative to the will and what it provides and seeks, being a blind motor in itself, its correspondence has to depend on its kinship with what is offered to it. It is disposed in definite ways by such and such desires. True: there is a circular procedure involved, but it is of a material, not of a formal sort. There is a give and take, but the metabolism is normal, not unbalancing. Such a circle is complementary, not vicious. Aquinas explains why, in the premises: "The act of faith which precedes charity is imperfect. It looks to charity for its completed per-

⁶ *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 1 (Commentary of Cajetan); Ps. 33:9.

⁷ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5 ad 5.

fection." This makes faith in one way prior to charity, but posterior to charity in another. Its priority is generative. Its posterior consummation through charity is ennobling and elevating, even to a higher order. It matures in the domain of dignity and excellence, thanks to the transfusion from without. Charity informs it but with a form that is extrinsic and quite different from its own.

Article 4

Is It Numerically One and the Same Faith That May Be Alternatively Either Formed or Unformed, Living or Dead?

Statement of the question. The question relates to faith as a distinct habit.¹ Concretely, the inquiry bears on the situation of a Christian who, persevering as such, nevertheless loses charity by lapsing into mortal sin and then regains charity through repentance. Is it infused faith that persists in Christians while they are in the state of mortal sin?

A corpse cannot be alive, nor a living body be a corpse. The substantial form of a corpse is not that of a real animal. Its species has changed completely. Applying this comparison, supernatural theology cannot be the possession of a heretic.

Conclusion. The habit of faith, formed or unformed, with or without charity, remains numerically one and the same (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 4).

Scriptural Proof. Confronted with the assertion of St. James that "faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:17) the interlinear gloss comments that: "Through works faith revives. It follows that faith at one time dead, through the absence of charity, in getting back the form of charity, lives again." [As Aquinas states: "Lifelessness is not a necessity for faith." It is a contingency that, of itself, is not destructive of faith as a habit.]

The Council of Trent holds to that position: "This assertion stands firm. It is not only by infidelity which consists in the loss of faith; it is by the commission of any other mortal sin, as well, that the grace of justification is forfeited" (Denz. 808). The doctrine is backed up by official canons: "If anybody says there is no such thing as mortal sin

¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 7, especially ad 1, 4.

short of infidelity, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 837); and: "If anybody says that faith is always lost by forfeiture of the state of grace, or that the faith that lasts over (when ordinary mortal sins are committed) is not true faith, even though it be lifeless—or [if anybody says] that a believer who is bereft of charity ceases to be a Christian, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 838).

Protestants were at the time saying: "Faith justifies without (the need of) works." None but a sin against faith, unbelief itself, is, properly speaking, a mortal sin that robs a soul of grace. That consequence was conveyed by Luther's challenge: "Be brave in sinning but still braver in believing."

Both Jansenists and Protestants developed stands against faith, but their aberrations were opposed to each other. For Jansenists, faith has to operate through charity if it justifies; whereas Protestantism claimed that even dead faith, in the Catholic sense, would be enough to justify a soul. The Jansenists maintained that dead faith was not faith at all, and until charity would be mobilized the soul would have neither grace nor faith.

Etymologically at least, one may consider Jansenism and Baianism as forms of mitigated Protestantism; yet they have been suppressed independently. Witness the doctrine of Arnauld (Denz. 1302): "When in great sinners all love is extinct, faith too is extinguished. What seems in them to be a survival of faith is only human. It is not divine." We would like to have put a particular article of our own into the hands of Arnauld or a similar article from Aquinas "On Truth"; but Arnauld disclaimed St. Thomas and the scholastics. Like Jansenius, Augustine was the only author Arnauld would read and the one author that he did not understand. Quesnel, on the point at issue, fell under a ban in three propositions (cf. Denz. 1401, 1402, 1407). He held that justification is an operation of faith; but faith does not operate except through charity. "All other means of salvation are contained in faith as in a germ or seed; but the faith that envelops them is naught without love and trust." "A sinner loses everything when he gives up hope, and there can be no hope in God without God-love." The same views were ventilated by Laberthonnière when modernism was rife.

Even lifeless faith is a "gift of God." Hermes was condemned by the First Vatican Council for denying it: "Faith itself, in itself" urged the Council, "even when not animated by charity, is a gift of God. Nude though it be, its exercise pertains to salvation, even though without

eternal merit. The sinner who does not relinquish his faith in the mysteries of salvation, is obeying God freely by consenting to the grace of faith and cooperating with it when he could as easily resist it" (Denz. 1791).²

The doctrine of St. Thomas has been reinforced on a large scale by all pertinent official declarations since his time. Theologians who were the saint's contemporaries were, nevertheless, at a loss to understand, much less foresee such a possibility.³ Certain ones among them ventured to hold that faith, when perfected through charity, was a newly infused habit. Two opinions bore on the way this could be: 1) The perfect habit of faith was conceived as thrusting out the imperfect one. The absurdity of this explanation lay in the fact that the imperfect habit thrown out was a "gift of God," and the newer gift would be a habit infused on account of sin. 2) Both habits of faith, informed and not formed, would continue on together. But in this case, the gift of lifeless faith would be useless.

Theological Proof. The position of St. Thomas is supported positively by a theological argument. What seem to be alternating habits of faith, informed and not formed, are one and the same identical habit.

Habits are diversified only by reason of some definite character that affects the habits *per se*. But the distinction between faith formed and unformed does not depend *per se* on anything pertaining properly to faith, for that would have to be in the intellect. It depends on charity, which is an outside habit residing in the will. An extrinsic habit of this kind may be compounded with faith—it cannot divide or diversify it. Metaphysically speaking, one and the same habit of faith, informed or unformed, is affected only accidentally by the overlapping or absence of the perfection that is of charity. The only contribution to faith that is possible and necessary on the part of the will is a pious disposition that keeps it credulous and sensitive to the devout movement and promptings of actual grace.

This argument may be done over in our favorite way, focusing attention on the object of faith. The diversification of habits depends on the formal objects that specify them. But in the case of faith, informed or unformed, living or "dead," there is no difference of informing objects involved. The one consistent formal object of faith remains the same in both conditions, namely, the norm applied to things revealed by God and accepted on the sole authority of God revealing. *Ergo*.

² Two footnotes have been incorporated into these paragraphs.

³ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 7.

The solution of objections will add increased support. Faith informed or unformed remains consistently one and the same in number.

Objection I. A dead animal cannot be restored to life and continue to be essentially what it was as a corpse. The *suppositum* itself is altogether changed. But unformed or lifeless faith is dead. Therefore, it cannot be quickened (by charity) without ceasing to be essentially what it was before.

Answer. Parity is lacking. The substantial form of an animal quickens it intrinsically and essentially; but the quickening of faith by charity is wholly extrinsic and accidental.

Objection II. But a dead work is not susceptible of life. Dead faith is a dead work.

Answer. A work is by nature transitory like all its operations. Past works or operations are gone. They cannot be gotten hold of to vivify. Faith is different. Being a permanent habit, even though imperfect and not informed by charity, it carries over and is always susceptible of the perfection that charity can bring to it at any time.

Objection III. But do not Thomists hold that a theologian, perverted into a formal heretic, loses the habit called theology? The previous coordination of his ideas may be remembered, but materially speaking, they resemble the parts of a human corpse which are on the way to complete distintegration. Similarly, lifeless faith is no better than the corpse of living faith. It is not, therefore, the same habit that constitutes living faith.

Answer. This comparison of faith and theology is unbalanced. The formal motive of sacred theology lies in its being a virtual revelation. This motive is departed from by a theologian who lapses into heresy. It is ignored. If theological lore survives, the coordination of its truths has to be preserved and unified materially, through some other motive thereafter. The invading motive usually turns out to be self-will or private judgment; for the heretical theologian settles down to believing whatever he chooses and discarding what fails to please himself—eternal punishment, for instance.

Grace, on the other hand, brings it about that the possession of faith is not a fleeting contingency, but a permanent endowment. Faith is a grace that lasts while faith itself lasts. The newness of a revival, or first fervor experience, does not constitute either grace or faith. It is purely accidental. . . . A man is justified only through an operation of God within him, but God is constantly justifying: "He is like the sun that is always charging the atmosphere with light." Charity, in addition, inten-

sifies faith and rounds out its perfection. There is no alternative, other than to admit that a sinner among the faithful may be bereft of charity, without losing the true gift of infused faith. That gift carries over.

The following article gains seriously in importance through its connection with this background.

Article 5

Is Faith a Virtue?

Statement of the question. There are four difficulties to be considered: 1) Faith is regulated by truth; virtue, by goodness. 2) Faith has no place among the intellectual virtues listed by Aristotle. Since the object of faith is not evident, it falls short of being a form of perfect knowledge. 3) Furthermore, it has no connection with other human virtues; when charity is absent, it is unformed as a theological virtue. 4) According to the Pauline grouping (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9), faith is a grace that has come to be designated as "*gratis data*." But no gratuitous endowments of the kind pass as special virtues. Why should faith?

Conclusion. Faith enlivened by charity is a perfect virtue. This cannot be said of lifeless faith. The difference is between faith informed and not formed.

Informed Faith Is Perfect as a Virtue

Proof from Authority. St. Paul identifies living faith as the principle of justification: "Being justified by faith, let us have peace" (Rom. 5:1). But justification is the operation of justice in general, which establishes harmony among the virtues. Therefore, St. Paul is dignifying faith as a virtue.

Proof from Tradition. Faith is a theological virtue. Its immediate specification is from God. By reason of this mark, it is superior to the moral virtues which have to do only with the means of attaining the last end. It is also superior to the intellectual virtues whose object is truth of the natural order, discerned in and through wisdom, knowledge, understanding of first principles, prudence, and art.

Bañez was right in censuring as temerarious the opinion of Durandus to the effect that informed or perfect faith is not properly and absolutely

a virtue. Much less should it rank, by comparison, as a greater virtue than unformed or lifeless faith.

Theological Proof. Whatever habit functions always as the principle of an act that is good is a virtue; that is, it is a good operative habit. But faith informed by charity serves always as a habit that originates good deeds by reason of the double fact that, under its influence, the intellect always and infallibly tends toward what is true, and the will toward what is good. *Ergo.*

This first part of the conclusion will gain in strength from the solution of the objections stated.

1. Faith must be a virtue, not part way, but completely and perfectly. It is not anything regulating, or regulated by, truth automatically or passively. It is an infallible agency for truth and goodness combined, as it were, compenetratively; so that, living faith can never originate falsity or evil. It is utterly incompatible with falsity since its formal motive is Prime Truth speaking [the Word of God]. And its condition of living faith guarantees, without fail, a trend toward God as a good end that bars all deviation toward evil.

2. Even though Aristotle excluded faith from his enumeration of intellectual virtues, our thesis stands. Aristotle cannot offer anything better than human authority, which is never absolutely proof against deception. But divine faith is infallible by reason of its motive. That makes of it a virtue. In the language of St. Thomas: "Faith leans on truth divine, truth that bars deception" actively and passively. Divine truth is above discussion.

3. [Objection third is covered by the second part of the conclusion. See below.—Tr.]

4. The theological virtue of faith is very different from faith which is aligned with graces "*gratis datae*" (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9). Such are prophecy, the talent of expounding wisely in communicating knowledge, and the gift of tongues. The theological virtue, faith, is the common possession of all Christians. This is not true of any grace called "*gratis data*," even though it go by the name of "faith." Aquinas points out that "faith" of the latter kind or degree is a brand of uncommon excellence, strong and impregnable, so to speak. As the Gloss explains, it is vehement and persuasive, if not contagious, thanks to the conviction with which preachers proclaim it or theologians propound it, even when deep in their personal lives they may not be much moved by it. That is the character of graces "*gratis datae*." They are endowments ordained primarily for

the neighbor's benefit, whether or not certain agents profit by them as they should for themselves.¹

Among the fruits of the Holy Ghost, St. Paul includes the theological virtue of faith (cf. Gal. 5:23). St. Thomas discerns the Apostle's reason: he was not treating of faith speculatively and in the abstract, but concretely, inasmuch as faith engenders a degree of delight by its exercise, owing to its steadying certitude. This entitles it to be mentioned as aligned with charity, peace, joy, modesty, and the rest.

Unformed or Dead Faith Does not Belong to the Category of Virtue as Measuring Up to Perfection

Unformed faith differs from living faith as an imperfect from a perfect condition, within the same species.

Proof. There is in lifeless faith the intellectual perfection required to make it a virtue; but the corresponding supernatural will action is absent. The same is true in the performance of temperance. If temperance existed only in the sensitive appetite, without any regulation by prudence, whose seat is in the reasoning faculty, its natural balance would not be perfection of the right sort to make it a perfect virtue. [Virtue is not automatic.]

For that reason, unformed or lifeless faith does not make a man simply good. It is a principle whose act is good and salutary, but not supernaturally meritorious. That being true, it falls out of the state and performance of strict virtue. With the impulse of an actual grace, when an act of faith is elicited by one who is in mortal sin, the deed is supernatural, and its aim is infallibly in the direction of divine truth revealed. This makes the act good. But good though it be, such an act of faith is not up to the proper standard. It is not positively actuated nor effectually directed toward the last end. The guilt of mortal sin goes so far as to keep the will turned away from the last end.

A comparison will be enlightening. It may be made between dead or unformed faith and the sacerdotal character. The character is not a virtue even though it operates in such a way that its effect, Eucharistic consecration, is always good. Nevertheless, to be performed rightly, consecration should be enacted holily. With faith and like faith, the

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 4 ad 2.

sacerdotal character requires the state of grace and charity as accompaniments for the proper modality that is distinctive of the grace of the sacrament conferred with holy orders.

A doubt. Granting that unformed faith cannot be strictly identified with the state of virtue, does not St. Thomas hold that it is nevertheless a true virtue?

Reply. The article we are discussing contains an express denial. The very imperfection of unformed faith prevents it from measuring up to an intrinsic requirement for virtue.

Supplemental considerations. This doubt denotes a failure to distinguish between what can mature as a true virtue, before it has outgrown the original condition of a mere disposition (not yet a virtue), and a habit that is not in any sense a virtue, even embryonically. Consider the temperance of a miser. It cannot be called a virtue. The miser cuts down on food and drink for a utilitarian motive. He loves money too much to spend it on them. Virtue has to be cultivated through a love of uprightness. Hence, after the repentance of a man from intemperance, he who, in spite of embarrassing handicaps, strives to grow in temperance as a condition for uprightness, is acquiring the virtue of temperance in the truest sense, even though he is slow in reaching the stage of perfection in which temperance becomes inviolable or, as scholastics say, *difficile mobilis* [difficult to jar].

In the intellectual order another comparison is available. A tyro who grasps intelligently the three first conclusions of geometry is in possession of real science, even though the qualification is only a disposition for the present. On the other hand, a pupil who learns the said conclusions as a memory exercise, without understanding them, may not be accredited with acquiring real science, even imperfectly.

A good habit need not be truly a virtue. Continency, shyness, or the inclination to indulge freely the sensible experience of commiseration, are habits that may be good without being virtuous. Nevertheless, they are not to be confounded with the false virtue we have described as practiced by a miser.

It is a certainty that (1) unformed or lifeless faith is not false virtue; (2) neither does it reach the rational standard of perfect virtue. But is it a virtue in reality, a true virtue, even though not actually stabilized, so as to constitute the firm reliability which virtuousness engenders as a state?²

² These supplemental considerations are from a footnote in the original work.

Thomists reply, and their more common view is supported by Gonet, Billuart, Serra, and Faucher, who agree that faith without charity is a true virtue, albeit imperfect; yet it is insufficient to be regarded as anchored in the state of virtue. It is like sacred theology which, on the one hand, is a true science, but on the other, is in an imperfect state, like the Church militant that fosters it along the way.

In other words, the essence of unformed faith is the essence of virtue. Otherwise it would be specifically distinct from perfect virtue, an error which has been discarded in Article 4. A threefold reason bolsters up this position: 1) Lifeless faith works an infallible determination in the mind toward revealed truth at least, even though it is stripped of sanctifying goodness. 2) It corresponds with the definition of virtue as a principle of good deeds, so invariable that nobody can commit evil by using it. 3) Being one and the same habit with faith made perfect through charity, it is susceptible of perfection, but remains outside the state of virtue, until it actually achieves perfection. Faith unformed does not operate with promptness or relish. Living faith does. It has nothing in common with false virtue, which we have illustrated by the utilitarian temperance of a miser. It takes moral integrity, virtue for virtue's sake, to constitute the state of virtue, and such a character or disposition is foreign to the self-centered miser's instincts.

A doubt. How can infused faith survive without sanctifying grace?

It seems impossible that it should, in the light of St. Thomas' description of infused virtues. Time and again the saint rehearses that infused virtues are related to sanctifying grace as properties are related to the essence whence they spring; or as faculties are related to the soul's essence. But detach properties from the essence that produces them and they cease to exist. *Ergo*, faith and hope in reality vanish with sanctifying grace.

Reply. Billuart's distinctions may be singled out as typically Thomistic. Faith and hope last over in the sinner as bare entities, lodged in a preternatural subject. We agree that they last over as rational forms of virtue, informed and perfect, in their connatural subject. We deny, however, that faith and hope are properties of infused grace as they are found in their connatural subject only, just as heat is a property of fire which is its connatural subject. But spread the heat into water and you have put it into a preternatural and violent subject. Water is naturally cool. It boils through heating. It evaporates. Temperature is a property of water, but not fire-heat. It is through God's mercy that lifeless faith subsists with sin. It is a kind of root, like that which remains in the

ground after a tree has been cut down. It may grow again. But such a root is not left over in demons or reprobate men.

Article 6

Is Faith a Single Virtue?

The sense of this title arises from two possibilities. Virtue may be either a very particular and distinct habit corresponding to a very exclusive specifying object, or it may be a bundle, so to speak, of numerous dovetailing habits.

Statement of the question. At first sight, faith may appear to abound in multiform habits. Wherefore, it would be comparable to wisdom and knowledge. These two intellectual virtues stand apart as habits, because wisdom is tied to things divine and knowledge to things temporal. This separates them into two habits. They cannot be one.

But faith exercises a coverage of habits in variety. The Trinity, Christ, and morals, all fall within its scope and are very diverse.

Moreover, Messianic faith in antiquity regarded Christ as one who was to come. It was different, therefore, from Christian faith in Christ, the Word already made flesh. "Christ will come—Christ has come." Are these two distinct articles of faith or only one? The impact of controversy over the matter perhaps had something to do in originating the present article.

Conclusion. Considered as a habit, faith is of one species only—both objectively and subjectively, even though it differs numerically in individual believers.

1. Objectively there is specifically only one faith, since faith receives its specification from one formal object and no other. There is an object *quod* and an object *quo*, but they are both the same. Prime Truth in its being is the object *quod*. Prime Truth speaking is the object *quo*. Forth from the object *quo* issue all secrets revealed. And we, the recipients, believe on the authority revealing, who is always God as Prime Truth. No wonder that St. Paul's warning to the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 4:5-6) turns out to be the foundation of the Church's unity.

2. Subjectively also, the faith is one. A habit derives both its species and its specific unity from the oneness of its formal object. Multiplicity affects its subject, the multitude who believe individually; but the faith so individuated in its recipients is neither divided nor multiplied thereby.

With regard to temporal matters proposed and covered by faith, they are and have to be connected with an eternal factor. The factor is Prime Truth in its being and speech. And so, by one and the same faith we assent to temporal elements—specifically, the Gospel facts and the narratives of Christ's life on earth—as well as to eternal elements, highest among them all being the Trinity. In the natural intellectual virtues appealed to, the overtowering unification under divine truth is missing. Wisdom and science or knowledge are distinct and independent virtues because they consider temporal and eternal things, which are themselves distinct and independent, each class in its own category. Science looks not beyond temporal things as such. Wisdom measures all things by eternal norms only. Wisdom's preoccupation is with the highest causes. Human knowledge investigates subordinate and inferior causes on the purely human plane.

The perplexity growing out of the idea that the Israelite and Christian faith, each in its proper epoch, is specifically one and the same, merits attention. Did not the Incarnation and birth of Christ break in two the faith of his forebears and that of his disciples?

The distance between past and future does not alter the focus of a common faith. The mystery or truth believed in is permanent. There is no change except in the variety of kinships that spring up through the multiplication of believers, before and after. It is only another phase of what has been presented as the individuation of habits of faith among believers whose faith is specifically identical.¹

The Angelic Doctor teaches: in both the Old and the New Law a common goal is recognized; its indivisible unity organizes and establishes oneness in the faith of all who pursue it. As we have said previously, the object of all three theological virtues is the last end. The transition, therefore, from the Old Testament to the New, in not having changed the ultimate goal, has marked only the passage of faith from an ancient state to a state that is more mature. What pre-Christian Hebrews rightly believed was to come, we now believe in as an accomplished event. Christ has come. There has been no change in the formal object of faith, patriarchal and Christian; there has been no rupture in the unified objects *quod* and *quo*.² Readjustments have been necessary in the language of the records before and after Christ's birth. Prophecy is not history, nor history prophecy; but both prophecy and history testify to the same one and only Christ.

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 103, a. 4; q. 107, a. 1 ad 1.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 2.

The central "mystery of faith" has not changed. The object of faith is truth divine, accepted for transmission by hearing. Intermediate speech is indispensable. But the variability of expression through languages, dialects, and tongues may be overwhelming without changing an iota of the primary formal object which makes faith what it is.

For those who claim that faith in the Incarnation, before and after it, implies a substantial break in the thing believed, the following reply should effect a truer adjustment. If prophecy were the formal object considered, the futurity of the subject would be essential; but faith is different. Antiquity or modernity makes no difference. The patriarchs looked forward by prophecy, but inward through faith. The expected Incarnation was always linked up with things that are eternal. These last were identified with its objects *quod* and *quo*.³ Hence, observes Aquinas: "Although prophecy and faith deal with the same things—for instance, the Passion of Christ (cf. Is. 53)—it is from two different angles. Faith envisions the passion insofar as it was the working outwards of an eternal mystery. It was God who suffered. God is eternal. His sufferings were temporal. They affected the material factor in the Incarnation. Faith extends to all of them, historically speaking." Prophecy need not go beyond the material factors. It need not even embrace all of them. Therein it is quite "contrary to faith" [in its mode, scope, and completeness].

Prophetic knowledge has no need of being supernatural, except by its mode. Neither have miracles. The hidden future things escape detection in the present, not by reason of their supernatural character, but because they are contingent.

Faith is the opposite. It is supernatural in its substance. Primarily at least, it has to do with what is essentially supernatural, the intimate life of God. Isaiah ranks as pre-eminent among prophets; yet, his personal faith was a more excellent endowment than his gifts as a prophet.

Article 7

Should Faith Be Classified as First Among the Virtues?

Statement of the question. There can be no solution apart from some hierarchical order dominating the virtues. Ours are days of democracy

³ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *III Sent.*, d. 24, a. 1 ad 3.

in which the idea of hierarchy is in disesteem, even for virtues. Certain teachers are inclined to judge promiscuously of men and virtues alike. "Kings are symbols." Lords or princes—what is the difference? "The people are supreme." Any question about the hierarchy of virtues is accessory, antiquated, obsolete.

Many leading thinkers, however, discuss the primacy of the intellect (or should it be the will—which?). There is primacy among virtues, a priority of priorities, since all things that God has made have "order and measure." Virtues, therefore do not, cannot match on the ground that they are all alike. They have an order of their own. Order is a disposition that consists in being before or after some measuring point that serves as a principle. Standards and meters in requiring coordination necessarily impose subordination to some fixed mental fulcrum or pivot.

Supplemental Explanation. Whatever things are coordinated, remarks Aquinas, have by that fact to be subordinated to a definite principle.¹ The Decalogue, in presenting precepts serially, amounts to a right ordering of man upwards toward God. This is subordination. In military discipline soldiers heed the captains, who in turn heed the higher officers, for the prosecution of a superior common end; yet, among themselves the soldiers keep step and march in line as a result of dictated coordination. Without subordination among things that are coordinated, the very principle of order is frustrated.²

According to St. Thomas the very nature of man inhibits reaction within him, toward a plurality of ultimate ends equally or indifferently. The specification of nature unifies the range of nature's goals so that only one can be an absolute ultimate. That one is Supreme Truth for the intellect. Subordinate thereto is Sovereign Good for the will.³ The faculties themselves have an order for they are not equal. [The will follows the intellect and everything else these two.] No two drops of water are just alike, nor do they function identically or the same way. Without this subordination, in face of complicated diversity, there would be no unity in the life of man. Without self-mastery, through the marshaling of innumerable actions into a unified consistency, how could life be one? True, man is not capable of absolute simple unity such as belongs to the pure act which God is; but being an organic creature he has and demands a unification through order, that comprehends and governs all his parts and their functions. Oneness or unity is a property

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 100, a. 6.

² This was a footnote in the original.

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 5.

of *ens*; so that nothing can come under *ens* without being placed under some one *ens*. The thought is proverbial: "No hunter can chase two rabbits at a time."

St. Thomas furnishes a profound explanation of the inequality and subordination of created things when he runs the inequality back to God as its cause.⁴

"Since matter exists on account of form, a material distinction is on account of some formal distinction." A merely material distinction is that which exists between the individual members of the same species. It does not bespeak an inequality of essence. A formal distinction, however, postulates inequality between essences; and inequality makes for a subordination of forms. The beauty of the universe is due to that subordination. Because of it the cosmos appears to be an enlarged organism, with its higher cells, the angels, all different from one another, through an inequality that affects them as pure forms devoid of individuating matter.

Suárez missed this point; consequently, he was thrown back unresourcefully into compounding theories that jumble partial causes, which he assumed to be equal on the one hand and yet diverse in nature, in unintelligible ways. In the matter of choice or election, for instance, instead of having the will follow the intellect, Suárez regarded both intellect and will as concurring simultaneously, matched and held together as equals by a common yoke.

And in the act of knowing, Suárez identified the operation without allowing for priority, either on the part of an idea conceived or the understanding conceiving it.

Such a blurring in the mind is incompatible with the true conception of spiritual life. It accounts for the error which would represent the mixed life so styled, as indifferently disposed toward contemplation or action, as if these two occupations were a pair on a par. Mixed or apostolic life tends properly toward contemplation first, and through its anchorage fructifies in good works and preaching ulteriorly.

We are now ripe for the inquiry: In the organic union of the virtues, what is meant by subordination? Unless the term can be competently defined the way is not open to an apodictical answer, determining the position of faith as first among the virtues.

Various objections have been alleged against the affirmative possibility: 1) Medieval glosses asserted that fortitude is a prerequisite for

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 47, a. 2.

faith, in the sense that fortitude neutralizes worldly fear or human respect which is a hindrance to faith. Fortitude thus becomes allegedly the foundation of faith. 2) Hope was put down as introductory to faith. 3) The faithful have been reputed as believing out of obedience to God. Obedience in that case would rank prior to faith. 4) From the fact that faith would never suffice for the foundation of the spiritual edifice, without being informed by charity, it has been argued that charity must precede faith, thereby pushing it out of the first place. 5) The will dominates in the act of faith. It moves the intellect to believe. But the will is the seat of charity from which it derives its meritorious perfection. Since faith is in the intellect, therefore, it cannot rank before charity that controls it through the will.

Nevertheless, the correct answer to the proposed inquiry cannot ignore St. Paul's teaching that "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). Substance holds the primacy. Therefore, faith stands first among the virtues.

A threefold conclusion enables St. Thomas to conciliate these views. 1) *Per se*, in the order of engendering, faith holds the first place among the virtues. 2) It is *per accidens* that any other virtue crowds it out of that position. 3) But in the order of excellence or dignity, charity, the perfect virtue, is prior to faith. These three conclusions will be substantiated separately.

First conclusion. Won over to the obvious sense of St. Paul's inspiration, "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for," the Council of Trent declared: "Faith is the beginning of human salvation."⁵

Theological Proof. In the order of generation, the knowledge of the last end has to precede the intention and the choice of means to gain it. But it is only through faith that true knowledge of the end is furnished. An intention to reach the goal of faith then ensues. It is supplied through hope and charity. As a pursuit of love, the infused moral virtues are next brought into action for the carrying out of the intention, by choosing effectively the means that are proper to them for that determinate end.

The major premise is based on two principles: "Nothing is willed without being known beforehand"; "The last thing to be achieved, one's end, is the first thing to be rationally intended." It operates as a final cause. Following upon its determination, definite means are decided upon to attain it.

The minor premise derives its force from the definitions of the vir-

⁵ Sess. 6, chap. 7.

tues. [Distinctions are in order between intellectual and moral virtues, between virtues acquired and infused, between virtues perfect and imperfect—the perfect virtues connoting an enduring state, over and above their specific acts or habits.]

Intellectual virtues of the natural order do not figure in our conclusion, since we are treating of the supernatural order. Although it is good rhetorical usage to designate them as virtues, the name fits them only *secundum quid* or in a partial sense. As natural habits, they are like an axis of first principles: wisdom, knowledge, art. In the generative order "there must exist some such natural habits, antecedent to infused faith. They are psychic necessities for the faith itself. Grace presupposes nature in the same way; more generally speaking, there is no perfecting of anything that is not previously perfectible." In this line of reasoning the preambles to faith do not belong *per se* to the faith which they point out; notwithstanding the handicap of those who, unable to penetrate the preambles on the level of pure reason, do not grasp their proving force, but confound them with faith itself and believe both.⁶

In a parallel manner, naturally acquired virtues as defined by Aristotle can have something preparatory to do in the generation of faith; but neither are they virtues in the perfect sense. Much less are they identified through any such connection as would be theirs in the comprehensive state of simple virtue. Fallen man is not so resourceful. Without the infusion of faith and charity, he is not competent to love God efficaciously above all things, even as the author of nature; nor does he suffice of himself to observe the whole of the natural law.

This is what authorizes Aquinas to declare that, in the order of engendering, faith stands "first among all virtues." He is speaking of full-fledged, perfect virtues which, through habits and acts, radiate forth from the state of virtue [as from a parental origin].

In this sense the Council of Trent is explicit: "Faith is the beginning of human salvation. It is the root of all justification" (sess. 6, chap. 8). Herein the Fathers are unanimous. This lineal priority of faith is a priority of nature, not of time. It has to be, for the complete organism of virtue is infused at once, in baptism (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 65), unless it is deformed by some spiritual obstacle in the moral life of the catechumen (cf. Denz. 799).

Second conclusion. By accident, a particular virtue might take to the fore in engendering, and thereby force faith into second place.

Theological Proof. The removal of an incompatible hindrance passes

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.

as a cause *per accidens*; and that can make it prior to a cause *per se*. But many virtues contribute to the removal of hindrances in believing. Fortitude eliminates inordinate fear. Humility neutralizes pride. Therefore, many virtues, *per accidens*, take the lead which forces faith behind.

This second conclusion is not in any degree detrimental to the first, for the antecedent virtues are not perfect until faith is actually infused—and with faith, charity. Until that follows, man is incompetent to intend, and much less tend efficaciously, toward his ultimate end, which, even in the natural order is God.

The major is evident. The mere removal of obstacles is not the exercise of any positive influx such as results from a cause *per se*. [Turning on a faucet does not make—it lets—the water flow.] Yet this cause *per accidens* operates before the cause *per se*, since the very nature of a removal implies a previous stoppage or interference with the working of the cause *per se*. [It is idle to turn the faucet, if the water supply has run out.] Adam in the state of original innocence, Christ and his Blessed Mother—all three had a plenitude of grace without any handicaps in virtue needing to be removed.

The minor is clear from experience. Fortitude makes faith fearless in advance. Humility rids one of pride, the subtle vice that refuses to commit self to the truth of faith. Spiritual writers are at one with St. Augustine in comparing humility to the excavation that has to be dug before an edifice can rise. The more towering the edifice, the deeper the excavation needs to be. And faith? It is the first stone placed in position after the hole is dug. Witness the solemn announcement of our Lord to St. Peter: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I shall build my Church" (Mt. 16:18). This imagery pervades the epistles of St. Paul. Timothy must remember that the Church is the "column and basis of truth" (1 Tm. 3:15). The Ephesians are no longer "sojourners and foreigners but fellow-citizens with God's own domestics, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, having Jesus Christ Himself for chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19). The stability of the Romans is identical (cf. Rom. 15:20). They are not to doubt. Paul will not build differently for them. He will not hear or heed any other man's deviations. He knows only this one gospel. The Christian term, "edifying," which means "up-building," is a sacred relic of St. Paul's prepossession: "You are God's culture, God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9). On Christ "the foundation-stone the whole building rises." Therefore: "Let everything done be edifying"

(1 Cor. 14:26). The basis of St. Paul's construction on Christ is "faith, the beginning of salvation." The elusive views of liberals and indifferentists cannot stand.

Third conclusion. In the order of perfection, charity passes before faith and all other virtues. It is the apex, the golden keystone of God's building. The Colossians are exhorted to have charity because "it is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14). It unites us to God supernaturally and effectively, by ordaining all other virtues Godwards. Indeed, it binds all other virtues into one sheaf of wheat, which St. Paul glorifies in the description: "There remain faith, hope, and charity, these three, but the greatest of them is charity" (1 Cor. 13:13). That is why we have said that faith is not the foundation-stone of the spiritual edifice of virtue, except insofar as it is connected through charity with all other parts of the edifice built above and on it.⁷

Objection. The intellect is a higher faculty than the will. But faith is anchored in the intellect and directs charity. Therefore, faith is prior to charity, not *e converso*.

Reply. That charity is superior to faith is demonstrated theologically.⁸ Charity is the greatest of all virtues. In a general way, knowledge is indeed more excellent than love. The reason is simple. Charity is love of goodness; but the object of knowledge is *ens* or being, which is prior to goodness and more universal. This accounts for love's dependence on knowledge for regulation and direction.

Nevertheless, along the way to heaven the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God. It is by love that souls are drawn and lifted up to God. The effect of knowledge is to draw God down to us and to impanel the knowledge we get of him within the shrunken boundaries of our creaturely ideas. By comparison, sight is a higher faculty than hearing; and yet, there is greater benefit in listening to a highly refined symphony than in gazing at a house or a wall or a bench. [It is not the use, but the object that determines use, its *ratio formalis*, which has the final word in determining excellence, amidst what might at times pass as a jungle of priorities.]

Since charity is the form of faith, it is what perfects faith, and for that reason it excels faith in perfection. For the rest, it is not correct to say that faith is the director of charity, in a way comparable to prudence as the immediate regulator of the moral virtues. Prudence deter-

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 7 ad 4.

⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 82, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 6 ad 1.

mines the golden mean; faith cannot have such a function over charity. Faith proposes the infinite as charity's object. It cannot penetrate the constitution of that indivisible infinitude, as prudence constitutes the measure of temperance. Charity draws toward the unchangeable God. The best faith can do is to draw God in our direction and circumscribe the little we perceive of him through limited concepts. This is why St. Thomas and the Thomists hold that, while one's earthly exile lasts, the love of God, located in the will, can be out of all proportion with the knowledge possessed about God in the intellect. Charity actively embraces even the secret unknown mysteries buried in God, since God is loved totally by charity, in the revelation of himself as Sovereign Good.⁹

"To be perfect, human knowledge involves the understanding in detail of whatever there is in a thing—its parts, energies, properties. Love is different. Rooted in the appetitive faculty, it desires and seeks a definite thing for whatever it is or may be, in itself. All that love demands for its own perfection is that its one definite object be grasped as a good thing in itself. So it happens that a thing may be liked a great deal without being well known; it may be perfectly loved although only imperfectly known." Youthful students, as a consequence, have a love of science greater than they realize, by the bare fact of their avidity for sacred learning.¹⁰ Love is awakened by the attractiveness of a good object, the knowledge of which serves only as a condition *sine qua non*.

Faith makes God and God's ways known. Charity embraces them and all that they contain. Prudence is a moral directive. Faith is a heavenward perspective. But the directive introduces a moderating form, which makes it more than a condition *sine qua non* for morality. [Charity as charity, is not susceptible of restrictions characterizing faith. The infinite is simple, has to be embraced *ex toto*, or not at all.]¹¹

Solution of doubts. Is faith more perfect than hope and the infused moral virtues?

Since faith concerns the last end and since infused moral virtues deal formally only with the means to that end, it stands to reason that faith is superior in perfection to infused morality. It is also more perfect than hope, as Gonet shows, *simpliciter*. It provides certitude for hope. Under faith's influence, hope breaks forth into its characteristic act, for "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for." Whereas faith pro-

⁹ Cf. Valgornera, *Mystica Theologia S. Thomae* (3rd edition, 1911), I, p. 18; *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae q. 27, a. 2 ad 2.

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 28, a. 1 ad 1.

¹¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, q. 27, a. 5.

vides certitude for hope, hope shares in it by an overflow from the intellect into the will. This transfusion results from the function of faith as more of a regulator and director for hope than for charity. Rather, faith does not strictly regulate or direct charity at all. It is not like prudence, which, properly speaking, does regulate the moral virtues.¹²

Objection. But hope is love and until the heavenly goal is reached it is better to love God than to know him.

Reply. Hope, indeed, is controlled by love. It is a phase of love designated because of its personal desirousness. Technically it is labelled the "love of concupiscence." Through the theological virtue of hope one thus loves God for his goodness toward oneself. The objection bears on a different angle of love. Its force issues from what theologians name the "love of benevolence" or friendship. Through friendship we love God on his own account, because of his sovereign goodness. Friendship elevates us toward him, unites us to him. Speaking with but one qualification, faith is more perfect than all other virtues except charity. In following Gonet, it is pleasing to add: faith is more perfect than intellectual virtues, more perfect than the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Inquiry. Then in what sense must one understand the gloss: "Hope opens up the way to faith"?

Reply. As an infusion, faith and hope are compenetrative. Since nothing can be wished for or willed without being previously known, faith exercises a lineal priority by showing what hope must tend toward. Thereafter hope induces the subject to persevere in faith.

Inquiry. But in what relationship does obedience function as a requisite for faith?

Reply. Obedience functions for faith, as it does for every other virtue imposed by the commandments of God. It has direct reference to the material fashioning of deliberate acts, just because God commands them; without any necessity of sorting out the acts in relation to faith or any other specific virtue from which they issue. As a particular virtue, obedience is a department of justice. It tenders homage due to another. As a consequence, infused obedience, which fits into infused religion, follows faith whose guidance it needs, to find the way to God precisely as the Lord whom every man is obliged in conscience to obey. As an acquired or humanly developed habit, obedience cannot lay claim to being a perfect virtue, consummately in the state of virtue,

¹² The two closing thoughts are rendered from a footnote.

without faith and charity. This means that right and righteous obedience entails a directiveness that must be animated by the theological virtues. They alone supply the long reach of obedience to the ultimate goal, to man's last end that must be efficaciously loved above all things.

This explanation clarifies what St. Paul dignified as the "obedience of faith." Obedience is the general feature of all virtues and is wrapped up in faith itself, if only because faith is an imperated virtue. Its essential assent is commanded by the will as homage due to God on the part of both spiritual faculties, the intellect and the will.

Inquiry. Is not mortal sin an impedient to the infusion of faith? Consider a pagan who is converted to the faith. His convictions firmly wed him to it, and yet he is unwilling to separate from a second wife or pay his debts. Since mortal sin suffices to make him a foe of God, would God infuse the habit of faith into such a one? ¹³

Victoria's view appeals: "The younger generation of theologians, including a percentage of Thomists, hold that faith is not infused without charity. The baptized candidate, without the forgiveness of mortal sin, actually receives the indelible character of the sacrament without faith. This opinion is probable. I, nevertheless, believe that St. Thomas held for the infusion of faith in the premises. It is assumed that the mortal sin in question has reference to the moral order. It is an offense against one or another of the moral virtues. Now Aquinas seems to admit the possibility of faith being infused without charity (cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 2 ad 3). From that I draw that faith and charity are not so connected that the divine act of infusion at baptism would be entirely frustrated. Faith would not be infused because charity would be deliberately refused. Victoria herein harmonizes with Soto, Cajetan, and Bañez.¹⁴

Article 8

Is Faith More Certain Than Science and All Intellectual Virtues?

Statement of the question. A difficulty grows out of three considerations: 1) It is sometimes possible for a believer to incline toward doubting in matters of faith. A scientist could not have an experience

¹³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 4.

¹⁴ Cf. Soto in *IV Sent.*, d. 6; *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 2 ad 3.

of this kind, at least in relation to first principles. 2) Sight, to which the solid findings of science are reduced, creates more certainty than hearing, which is the basis of believing. 3) As St. Anselm observes, faith craves to be understood. This would not be if understanding were not more perfect and produced greater certainty than faith. St. Augustine is right in holding that "faith gains in strength through knowledge." But his position apparently exalts the science of theology above pure faith as regards certitude, and the gifts of understanding and wisdom would soar higher still.

First conclusion. Taken in itself without any modification, the certitude of faith is superior to all forms of natural knowledge. It is likewise superior to the gifts of the Holy Ghost as possessed by wayfarers. But on our part, owing to the default in evidence, faith fails in equaling the certitude that is caused intrinsically by natural cognition.

The first part of the conclusion has been denied by Durandus. That fact does not weaken the following proofs.

Scriptural Proof. St. Paul stressed to the Thessalonians "that when you received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God who works in you who have believed" (1 Thes. 2:13). But what can be more certain than God's own word? More solemn still was the asseveration to the Galatians: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you different from what we have preached to you, let him be *anathema*" (Gal. 1:8). The Gospel preaching of St. Paul is rooted on this summit of stability. As he assured the Romans: "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else created, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38). This is equivalent to sustaining that, along the way to heaven, there can be no greater certitude about the mystery of redemption which, in other words, is the power of Christ's love, manifested in redeeming human kind.

St. Paul is inflexible. To the Corinthians he shows himself Davidic: "I have spoken because I have believed" (2 Cor. 4:13). We believe; therefore, we also speak. To Timothy he was reassuring: "I know whom I have believed and I am certain that he is able to keep the trust committed to me until that day" (2 Tm. 1:12). This protestation was on the background of the Apostle's divine mission as an appointed "preacher and apostle and teacher of the gentiles," who grew magnanimous

through the endurance of persecution. Timothy should be worthy of Paul, "for God has not given us the spirit of fear: but of power and of love and of sobriety. Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but labor with the gospel, according to the power of God" (2 Tm. 1:7-8). Action must be manful in the defense of the Gospel, even in face of death by martyrdom. To emphasize the endowments of Paul by including among them the gift of prophecy, the same mode of reasoning is resorted to, which St. John ascribes to the Samaritans: "Many more believed in (Jesus) because of his own word and they said to the woman who dwelt among them; 'We do not now believe because you told us for we ourselves have heard him and know that he is indeed the Savior of the world' (Jn. 4:42). We dismiss numerous other available texts.

Proof from Tradition. These deserve to be weighed attentively, because they contribute so much support to the doctrine of Aquinas which is denied by Durandus.

Out of many titles indexed by Denzinger, two typical ones purport to be good summaries. First summary: The assent of faith is certain, infallible, and immutable because of its motive which is the authority of God revealing.¹ Modernists were condemned by Pope Pius X for holding that, in the long run, the assent of faith grows out of an "accumulation of probabilities." Quite the contrary stated the pontiff (cf. Denz. 2079 ff.), the truth of faith is absolute and against it no allegedly opposite truth can stand historically.² These documentary materials bear directly on the objective basis or motive governing the certitude of faith.

Second summary: The assent of faith is above comparison, by the firmness of the mind's interior adhesion to the truth of faith. This subjective condition follows upon the infusion of the virtue of faith, with its essential ordination toward God, through the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.³ It accounts for the profession of faith in the Blessed Trinity by the Fourth Council of the Lateran, which begins with the solemn formula: "We firmly believe and confess unreservedly." Pope Boniface VIII is exclusive and emphatic: "We are compelled

¹ Cf. Denz. 723 (declarations of Sixtus IV), 1637 ff., 1656 (Pius IX against Hermes and Guenther), 1789 ff., 1794, 1800, 1811 ff. 1815 (First Vatican Council), 1968 (Leo XIII against Americanism), 2025 (St. Pius X against Modernism).

² Cf. Encyclical *Pascendi* (Denz. 2079 ff.).

³ Cf. Council of the Lateran (Denz. 428), and the Second Council of Lyons (Denz. 460, 468).

through the urgency of faith to believe in the one holy Catholic Church as apostolic. Our faith in it stands firm and we confess it without reserve. Outside that Church there is neither salvation nor remission of sins."⁴ The impact, clear and solemn, is everywhere enforced. "The sacrosanct Roman Church," as the Council of Florence declared (Denz. 706 ff.) "believes most firmly—it professes and preaches the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost" (Denz. 706).⁵

Very special attention should be directed toward definitions of the First Vatican Council, which were framed for our own epoch. Relative to faith, it is "the beginning of human salvation. The Catholic Church professes it to be a supernatural virtue by which, thanks to God's in-breathing and the help of his grace, we believe to be true, whatever God has revealed" (Denz. 1789). There can be no doubt about the bearing of such a statement on the firmness of mind actuating one who believes. The Council specifies that the mental fixedness does not result from the perspicuity detected by the natural light of reason as inseparable from the "intrinsic truth of things believed." It results directly from "the authority of God revealing, (God) who cannot be deceived nor can he deceive." This final proposition has reference to certitude that is objective and absolute (cf. Denz. 1811 ff.).⁶

Divine revelation thus established, receives confirmation outwardly from miracles and prophecies which are its most certain signs. They are signs that should pass as valid even in the natural course of events (cf. Denz. 1790). For that matter (Denz. 1794), "the Church, of herself, exemplified through her wondrous propagation . . . is a perpetual motive of credibility and an unimpeachable guarantee of her own divine delegation" (Denz. 1794). By her survival, growth, and spreading, she is "a sign, raised up on high, among the nations, inviting to her bosom those who have not yet believed, while rendering her own children more positive than ever, that the faith they profess rests on an impregnable foundation. To this testimony there accedes a help that is efficacious. It issues from power descending from above."

Reasonableness in one's attitude toward the faith was inculcated by Pope Pius IX when dealing with the followers of Hermes (cf. Denz. 1637). Being for or against the faith is not an indifferent toss-up. In "such a serious matter, human reason" needs cautioning against decep-

⁴ Pope Boniface VIII, Bull, *Unam sanctam*.

⁵ Cf. also, as for the first title, Pius IX against the followers of Hermes (Denz. 1637), and the First Vatican Council (Denz. 1791, 1794, 1815).

⁶ Cf. also, Denz. 1811 ff., 1790, 1794.

tion and error. "There follows an obligation to inquire diligently into the fact of revelation [Has God spoken or has he not?] and when it becomes certain that he has, one must exercise toward him the rational obedience that is due."

Long ago, Pope Innocent XI had banned these laxist propositions (cf. Denz. 1169-1171): "Man's will cannot bring it about that there should be an assent to faith whose firmness would exceed the weight of whatever reasons would be impelling him to believe." The fallacy of this position is a denial, equivalent to saying that there is no more certitude in the assent of faith than there is in the natural judgment concerning its credibility. This is the error condemned. These others go with it: "Supernatural assent to faith may accordingly be repudiated as an affair of prudence"; "The assent to faith that is supernatural and useful for salvation, does not require more than a merely probable knowledge of revelation. It is compatible with the fear one might have that perhaps God has not spoken at all."

There is no parity, therefore, between true and pretending believers or skeptics. The First Vatican Council describes the consequences of embracing truth or error in the premises: (Denz. 1794). "There is not the least room to hold for an equality between those who have clung to Catholic truth, because they possess the heavenly gift of faith, and others who, guided by human opinions, are the followers of false religion. Those who have received [the coin of] true faith, through the magistracy of the Church can never have a just cause for changing their belief or for calling their faith into doubt. . . . Let us therefore uphold unflinchingly the confession of our hope—it cannot decline" (Denz. 1794). [Our faith is unerring.]

Supplementing a detail, it is appropriate to produce in this connection the canon covering an aberration of Hermes: "If anybody says there is no difference between the condition of the faithful and that of souls who have not yet attained to the only true faith—so that Catholics might find a lawful reason for suspending their assent, after some doubt has arisen concerning the faith they have embraced under the magistracy of the Church—until they would satisfy themselves [independently] with regard to the scientific character of the demonstration offered, touching the credibility and truth of their (personal) faith, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 1815). This official condemnation is aimed at a deliberate doubt, not at the fleeting experience of an indeliberate doubt that might surprise one in a moment of temptation.⁷

⁷ This supplemental paragraph is inserted from a footnote by the author.

The First Vatican Council proceeds forthrightly: "The doctrine of faith is to be guarded jealously and declared infallibly as a divine deposit entrusted by Christ to his Spouse. For this reason, the sense of sacred dogmas, which is to be perpetually retained, is the one which Holy Mother Church has at any time declared for all and which is not to be departed from, even in favor of apparently higher intelligence" (Denz. 1800)—wrongly so-called.

Theological Proof. It must be pointed out from the first that there is no question here of natural certitude, either physical or historical, touching the fact of Gospel preaching; nor is there any question as to the rational knowledge of miracles and other signs establishing the divine origin of that preaching. The present concern is the certitude of faith itself. The conclusion offered has two parts.

First part: Taken in itself and without modification, infused faith has greater certitude than all forms of natural knowledge. Whatever truth derives its certitude from its own formal motive is absolutely certain. But infused faith, by reason of its own formal motive and its application, exceeds in certitude all forms of natural knowledge. Therefore, it has greater certitude than all forms of natural knowledge, even the most evident.

The major is clear. A simple judgment passed on anything entails a judgment affecting its formal cause. But in the matter of a habit, the formal motive is the formal cause. It is the prime agency denominated in the knowing habit. In virtue of its reach, all other things pertaining to the habit are enfolded in the knowledge of the same. The interrelation is that of sight and light. Sight reaches all its objects through light.

The minor stands firm. Infused faith rests immediately and most firmly on Prime Truth. Through the actual influx of the Holy Spirit inspiring and enlightening, faith relies on God's own authority exercised as Prime Truth revealing. It is this faith which Holy Church applies infallibly to revealed truths, as often as it declares of any one of them: "It has been revealed." Truths known naturally are of a different category. Even in their highest forms, such as the habitual certitude of first principles, wisdom, the speculative sciences—and for stronger reasons, prudence, and art, that are always concerned with contingencies—natural truths have no brighter light than that of human reason, which is always liable to err. Handicapped by sin, the mind is beclouded, if not enshrouded, in darkness. Not being always wide-awake, it can be mistaken in what it sees. In testifying, slips of the memory can

lead to a false deposition, which is all the more serious when the thing forgotten is a principle. Therefore, infused faith excels in being absolutely more certain than all forms and varieties of natural cognition, even the most evident.

Second conclusion. At a particular angle (*secundum quid*), faith may be put down according to a human standard as having less certitude than evident natural cognition.

Proof. Whatever certitude is derived from a source inferior to the formal object—for instance, the personal disposition of a thinker—is graded according to the lower level of its source. In that case the certitude would be qualified, as through the phrase “humanly speaking” (*quoad nos*). But things learned about and known naturally gain in perspicuity according to the disposition of the subject. They gradually grow in evidence. The mysteries of faith never grow evident. Therefore, humanly speaking, the truths of natural science have greater certitude than the truths of faith. [The force of this argument is only relative, or *secundum quid*. The different levels prohibit an absolute comparison.]

Explanation of the major: The specification of knowledge comes properly from its object and formal motive. These bestow upon knowledge its dignity, and therewith whatever certitude it possesses. Speaking simply, a conclusion that has been demonstrated is more certain than an opinion. Nevertheless, men of fixed ideas can cling to an opinion more tenaciously than to a demonstration, for the simple reason that necessary elements in the demonstration are above their grasp. They do not—perhaps they simply cannot—follow rigorous reasoning. Thrown back on their own limitations, they choose to adhere to what draws them most. They hold on tightly to what they understand of the opinion, and being unable [or perhaps unwilling] to understand what is of first importance in the demonstration, they illustrate what is here meant by certitude as mere firmness of grasp. In technical language, a man of this stamp has certitude; but it is quite his own. It is *secundum quid* and derives its strength, not from objective truth, but from the holder’s private personal disposition.

Explanation of the minor: It is owing to the disposition of humans (*quoad nos*) that natural cognition, built upon evidence, is for them more certain than faith. But it is so only *secundum quid*. It is a human experience that intelligence feeds more greedily on things that are known to be evident. They satisfy the more fully they contribute to the

attainment by the intellect of its connatural and proportionate object. Evidence produces mental repose. Faith cannot go so far with its content, which never becomes evident to wayfarers. Faith is always of things unseen.

As a consequence, although absolutely speaking the habit of faith involves greater certitude than humans can acquire, even for the first principles of any science, nevertheless, the full power of that infused certitude does not preclude particular indeliberate impulses to doubt, through the weakness and instability of human character, not as yet fully strengthened by beholding the sublime mysteries revealed.

*Confirmation by analogy.*⁸ In the purely natural order metaphysical certitude is higher than physical certitude; and yet it happens that certain thinkers, who do not rank as wise, are grasped by them with less firmness. St. Thomas herein coincides with Boëtius: "There are certain mental conceptions which, *per se*, are possessed in common only by the wise. That incorporeal things are not in space is such a perception."⁹

Metaphysical certitude which is produced by intellectual evidence growing out of the necessary resolution of things back to their intelligible entity is, simply speaking and by itself, of greater firmness than physical certitude, which depends on evidence of the sensible order. For such evidence to be produced, the mediacy of the senses is required. Nevertheless, whatever things are perceived directly by the senses, that is to say, all sensible objects, are more knowable to sense-enlivened humans, than things that have been separated or abstracted from matter. Consider the principle of finality as an illustration: "Every agent acts for a purpose." This truth is metaphysically certain. It is more certain than the formal existence of colors outside the mind. And yet there are those who question the necessity of the principle of finality, with never a doubt about the formal existence of colors in nature. Aristotle keenly observes that "things of the purely intelligible order are, of themselves, knowable in the highest degree, owing to their complete removal from the domain of sense. Sensible objects, on the contrary, being immersed in matter and motion [or physical energy] are of low grade intelligibility in themselves; but for us their understandableness is of a superior kind."¹⁰ They fall within the horizon of our natural grasp.

Some analysts have seen room for doubting whether the particular

⁸ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 455.

⁹ *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 2, a. 1.

¹⁰ Aristotle. *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, chap. 1.

parcel of faith accorded to us is more certain than evident natural cognition, since there is admittedly a default in its certitude that defies the believer's conception. The doubt is barred by the reality.

It is unescapable that the objective formal motive and infused light of faith actually produce in believers their own formal effect; but, as St. Paul explained to the Corinthians: "We carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). Gonet asserts: "It is contradictory to hold that any form contained in its proper subject could fail to imprint on that subject the formal effect due. Since the form is physically indistinguishable from its subject, the effect is bound to follow. Whiteness whitens and grace ingratiates." Because they do, Aquinas declares: "The certitude man has about what he hears from God who cannot be deceived, is far greater than any he can gain from the use of his own reason, since he himself is not aloof from being deceived." St. Augustine is emphatic: "It would be easier for me to doubt my own existence than to waver about what I have heard (from God)." ¹¹

A Christian philosopher, therefore, believing in good faith that he has run across a demonstration of something that counters faith, without his being aware of it, on becoming better informed about the truth that is of faith will be more resolute in doubting his demonstration than in questioning the opposite truth of faith.

Objection. It seems impossible that one should be more certain of what he hears from God than he is about what he sees.

Reply.¹² Creaturely being has four phases: First, one may consider it in its own peculiar nature. Secondly, one may consider the concept of it in the mind. Thirdly, there is its prototype in God's mind. Fourthly, it may be considered in itself, abstracting from all these. When, therefore, a statement is made that the creature's being is more truly in God than in itself, a comparison is involved between the first and third considerations with regard to the fourth. Every comparison implies some kind of a common background; for this reason the being of creatures is anchored more truly in God. Whatever is inside anything has to fit or match the requirements of what it is inside of. [Otherwise, there will be materially a bursting or a crushing or a being made-over.] But the prototype in God is uncreated, whereas the being formed thereunto is created. No created being, however, can equal the uncreated in the truth or reality of being. [Only God can say: "I am who am."]

The application of this teaching is worded by Aquinas: "All else

¹¹ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. VII, chap. 10.

¹² St. Thomas Aquinas, *I Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 3 ad 2.

being the same, sight engenders more certitude than hearing. But if the sight of the seer is surpassed by the sight of the speaker, then certitude is strengthened more by what the seer transmits from the speaker than by what he sees himself." If, with notably failing sight, it seems to me that a picture in the distance is one of St. Thomas, and a neighbor with reliable sight assures me that it is, I am certified by the neighbor's assurance, far more than by what I see with my own eyes.

By parallel reasoning, if, in the scientific order, I have personal certainty as to the real [and not merely nominal] distinction between created essence and created existence, I grow more convinced of the distinction when I learn that St. Thomas was firm in teaching that the distinction is real.

And so it turns out that, whereas faith and knowledge or science cannot coexist formally concerning the same object, faith in the existence of God as the author of grace and supernatural providence contributes much power from on high to the certitude acquired naturally concerning the existence of God as the author of nature and natural providence.

Third conclusion. Simply speaking, faith comports greater certitude than the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This does not prevent the gifts of understanding and wisdom from being relatively more perfect than faith. They induce a greater manifestation of divine mysteries through increased penetration, intimate familiarity, and relish.¹³

The totality of certitude going with the gifts springs from the certitude of faith, in somewhat the same way that the certitude of known conclusions issues from that of their principles. There is no such thing as penetration of the mysteries of faith through the gift of understanding and relishing their sweetness through the gift of wisdom, unless they are firmly believed in beforehand, on the authority of God revealing them. The gifts in question do bestow an increase of perfection, but not a different additional perfection of a higher brand. They improve a subject relatively, not absolutely. They ward off errors and confer knowledge that is more consistent with one's personal gain.

The Angelic Doctor is explicit: "Just as intellectual virtues take precedence over moral virtues, which they regulate, so also do theological virtues which keep the mind in union with God come before the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which they in turn regulate."¹⁴ The latter regulation, however, is remote, because the proximate regulation of the

¹³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 2; q. 45, a. 2.

¹⁴ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 8.

gifts is due immediately to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Aquinas cites St. Gregory the Great in this connection. Thus it happens that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have more perfection than living faith, but only in a modified sense. Their perfection is that of fruit. Relatively considered, fruit is more perfect than the tree that bears it; but, in an absolute sense, the single tree that bears is more perfect than all its crops of fruit put together.

If the point discussed were only a matter of high and low, it might be argued: whatever imparts perfection is higher than what it perfects. But the gift of understanding adds to the perfection of faith. Therefore, the gift of understanding ranks higher and is more certain than faith.

The major is too general; it needs to be distinguished. If the perfection is dispensed absolutely and really of itself, the major is true. But if the perfection is only relative and based on a comparison with human subjects, the major topples. It extols the seasonal fruit above the perennial tree that grows it.

The formal motive of the gifts is indeed superior to the formal motive of faith. Faith survives without charity; but not the gifts. Through the gifts one clings to the mysteries of faith by a kind of second nature founded on infused love. But that superiority is relative, not absolute. It depends on the condition of the subject.

Solution of Difficulties

Difficulties affecting the first and principal part of the conclusion:

1. Cajetan censures Durandus for the way he takes in opposing this doctrine: "The good man spared himself the pains necessary to understand the terms in which the teaching is couched. This is why he states that certitude of itself is in the mind and need not be commensurate with its object. An object can be most perfect and yet known only as a probability."

Cajetan points out: "St. Thomas did not define certitude of itself by comparing it with an object. He defines it by comparison with its own intrinsic cause, its formal motive. It is only from formal or quasi-formal causes, or from some formal motive [which falls into the same category] that habits and acts develop certitude expressly.

Durandus insisted that the more certain a thing is, the farther is it removed from doubt. Now the findings of science preclude all doubt. Therefore, science is more certain than faith.

The extrinsic distance from doubt which is a mental attitude, does not constitute certitude. There needs to be a firm formal motive, over and above. Without this inherent form there is no reliability in the certitude alleged. Hence, faith, which in itself is more certain than mere rational knowledge, can be mixed up in a believer's mind with doubts for which he may not be responsible.

"To know," persists Durandus, "is a more perfect act than to believe. Therefore, to know God is more perfect than to believe him."

All other things being equal, the major would be sound, but they are not equal. Is Durandus talking about the beatific vision? Far from it. If he were, we would concede the major. To know God in beatitude is indeed more perfect than to adhere to him through faith. But to have faith in God, for wayfarers, is far more perfect than knowing only rationally that God exists. In itself supernal beatific vision will be most certain, and in our regard more certain than all other forms of human cognition.

A *metaphysical difficulty*. The stability of faith in Prime Truth revealing, in being proof against error, needs to be fenced in by the principle of noncontradiction. But the principle of noncontradiction is known naturally. Therefore, at least the principle of noncontradiction must be put down simply as stronger than faith.

Distinguish the major: Whether or not Prime Truth in its substance is salvaged from error by the principle laid down for the moment, makes no difference. Certitude has to do with the formal motive of faith, the *quo* and the *quod*. In this respect, the principle of noncontradiction, known in advance of faith received, contributes not one iota toward motivating the act or habit of belief when infused.

Passing over the minor, the conclusion errs in treating the principle of noncontradiction as if it were an active factor of faith, which it is not. It does not enter into the formal motive of belief in any degree, even though it is known beforehand.

An explanation is to the point. We have branded the cleavage between Prime Truth revealing and error as a consequence, following from the principle of noncontradiction, with a *transeat*. [It makes no difference.] We are dealing with a substantial or entitative distinction. But a subdistinction is called for, such as St. Thomas introduced in solving a difficulty of St. Anselm.¹⁵ The issue brings forth a most profound observation.

¹⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 2, a. 1.

Inasmuch as the principle of noncontradiction wards off the intrusion of alien error into the supernatural order already existent, the major is true. But inasmuch as it protects the integrity of Prime Truth antecedently in the natural order, the major is false. Prime Truth or First Truth, as honored by faith, does not belong to the natural order. Its function in the supernatural order is, by itself, that of a necessary and sufficient formal motive of faith. In other words, Prime Truth, being the first truth of all, activates directly and completely the assent of the intellect believing. This it accomplishes exclusively and, of itself, through its divine influx, independently of any foregoing or foreknown principle [even the principle of noncontradiction]. It proceeds as highest truth, than which there is no higher [as sovereign Prime Truth to which there is none prior; as simple truth than which there is none truer]. Prime Truth, even for its own protection, can never be reduced or resolved into anything prior to, higher, or truer than itself. In a most absolute sense, God who is comes before all created entities and is not entrained by principles abstracted from created entities *a posteriori*, not even by the principle of noncontradiction. And yet, since humans advance from nescience to wisdom through finding out and discovering truths, God, who is before all, may not be learned about by them until after the creaturely principle of noncontradiction has been previously learned and become mentally operative.

We have branded the minor also with a *transeat*. What does it matter?

The principle of noncontradiction is a discovery in the natural order. Its application affects formally the natural order only. It cannot be said to fit connaturally into the first place in the supernatural structure—to which it does not belong. Wherefore, the conclusion is unscathed. Prime Truth revealing and formally flowing into the assent of faith, is, in simple speech, higher and firmer than the natural evidence of the principle of noncontradiction. It belongs to a different and higher domain. [Whatever truth there is in the principle of noncontradiction issues radically from Prime Truth and Prime Truth owes nothing to it objectively. Prime Truth is sovereign and supreme: "I am who am."]

Billuart makes the point clear: "Whenever the principle of noncontradiction is said to be more certain than any other, the comparison must be understood as relating to truths within our grasp," truths admitted because of their human evidence. The principle does not carry absolutely of itself, in such a way as to contribute positively to the

formal motive of any other truth or principle. Even though it did, the certitude established by it as a product of human reasoning could never equal the light of faith which Holy Church applies to every truth revealed. "Similarly, the certitude about God's existence, which can be proved by demonstration, is enhanced by the Church's solemn approval, emphasizing the force of the demonstration, without having had anything to do with originating it. The additional certitude imparted and acquired amounts to a confirmation of the natural demonstration from above. It is a heavenly asset." Gonet sides with Billuart in so holding.¹⁶

First corollary. The following deduction from ecclesiastical declarations does not involve a vicious circle. "Faith is not discursive by its nature. Neither is it, on that account, formally and intrinsically reducible to a bare natural certainty concerning God's truthfulness, as backed up by miracles performed in proof of revelation." This corollary exercises a strong impact when applied to the interpretation of our first article concerning the analysis of faith commonly accepted by Thomists. If the gift of faith, when infused, leaves no room for discursiveness, but clings supernaturally to Prime Truth revealing, then it is by one and the same single act that we believe mysteries, believe God who reveals them, and believe in the action by which he reveals. It is like seeing with the same glance, light and colors when the light is shining on the colors.

With reference to the evidence furnished by miracles, it operates materially and extrinsically from an inferior level. It is a foregoing disposition, like the intuitive perception of first principles, which runs back materially and extrinsically to the phenomenon of sensation. One "feels" convinced in advance of the analysis of the conviction, which follows through the deliberate application of the known principles.

For supplementary treatment, see what we have written elsewhere on "the essential supernaturalness of infused faith" and its unfailing certitude."¹⁷

If faith failed to attain its formal motive without becoming discursive, its motivation could not be formal in any sense. There would be a compounding, or rather a divided dependence on some other previously known motive. The admixture would not be of faith. Faith would

¹⁶ Gonet's view has been given prominence in our article and in the introductory dissertation on Sacred Theology, a. 5.

¹⁷ In our treatise, *De Gratia*, pp. 388-402, under the more specific topics, the essential supernaturalness of infused faith and its infallible certitude are treated.

be lacking in the one thing necessary to make it a virtue, namely, a single definite formal motive through which it would attain to all else belonging to it, just as sight through light reaches all objects seen.¹⁸

It is through the certitude that bars discussion from the act and habit of believing that faith is distinct from the science of sacred theology.

Second corollary. Sacred theology, whose formal object extends to all virtual revelation, is of itself more certain than all other natural science, including the habit of first principles; yet, from the human standpoint it is not so surpassing.¹⁹ This is the reason: in virtue of its formal motive, sacred theology is supernatural from its origin. It is rooted in faith, but its material content is natural and the result of human investigation. These two facts place it on a level of inferior grade as compared with the absolute certitude of faith.

The thesis is confirmed by what St. Thomas says about the faith of the Samaritans (*Ev. sec. Joan.*, IV, lect. 5).

Aquinas shows that the impregnable certitude of faith lies in its formal motive. The Samaritans had a motive that resisted further swaying. Hence, they said to the woman: "Our belief no longer depends on what you tell us" (Jn. 4:42). But, for the perfection of faith three things are necessary: correctness, promptness, and certitude. Any one of three agencies can lead souls to Christ: (1) natural reason; (2) the testimonies of the Law and the prophets; (3) the preaching of the apostles and others. But when the soul of a believer is, as it were, led by the hand, he can deny that he is influenced by any one of these agencies. He believes not for any natural reason, not for any testimonies ascribed to the law, even through the accessory of preaching—he believes solely on the authority of Prime Truth, after the patriarchal example of Abraham, "the Father" of all the faithful. Abraham "believed God, and it was reputed to him, unto justice" (Gn. 15:6). The Samaritans acted the same way. They believed Jesus because of his own word (cf. Jn. 4:41-42).

Aquinas points out that this assent of faith is subjectively the firmest. That is what faith demands; for one who deliberately doubts a matter of faith becomes an unbeliever. As St. James counsels those who pray: "Let one ask in faith without wavering" (Jas. 1:6). That the Samaritans had real and certain faith is clear from what they declared: "We have

¹⁸ Cf. Gonet, *De Fide*, disp. 8, n. 19 ff.

¹⁹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 1, a. 5, in connection with expositions by Billuart and Gonet.

heard him. . . . We know." It is rhetorical usage at times to make belief and knowledge synonymous, not in an absolute sense, but by reason of the certitude, barring doubt, in which they agree. If science or knowledge is certain, so is faith—only more so! Human reason, which guarantees scientific correctness, may now and then default. It is not so with divine reason which can never be gainsaid. Faith is divine. Its certitude radiates from divine light, once it is infused. Human certitude has no better source or prop than natural light. The strongest truths in a science are its first principles, and human knowledge identifies them through its inherent natural sight. The superior principles governing faith are detected as issuing from infused light, such as St. Paul praised in the Ephesians: "By grace you are saved through faith and not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

Infused light, or sight, is the solitary and sufficient explanation of the subject's unflinching grasp of the faith, in face of the objective certitude due to the formal motive of the faith in itself. This is somewhat of an anticipation. Following the order chosen by St. Thomas, we shall treat the matter more searchingly in Question Six.

A doubt. Is this unlimited certitude affecting faith consistent or compatible with liberty in the act of believing? ²⁰

Reply. Aquinas answers affirmatively. He maintains that the act of faith is free, not merely as to its performance, but also as to its specification. The absence of intrinsic evidence touching the mystery believed robs it of compulsion sufficient to force the intellect to assent. For all that, its formal motive keeps it objectively most certain. Being an infused habit, the subject's grasp is of the firmest. Add thereto the actual enlightenment and interior inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Both comport an influx which draws the recipient to lay aside all questioning and, by the virtue of one single simple act, to adhere immediately to Prime Truth revealing and to all mysteries revealed.

DeLugo and Suárez offer other conciliatory ways, but DeLugo fails to preserve firmness, relative to the fact of revelation, and Suárez compromises the intrinsic liberty which qualifies the act of believing.²¹

DeLugo proceeds thus: Natural certitude about the fact of revelation, as confirmed by miracles, puts an end to prudent fears. Nevertheless, the fact itself remains inevident. This is what leaves the act of believing free.

This reasoning errs. There is nothing to prevent the fact of revela-

²⁰ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, chap. 14, a. 2.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, I, p. 456.

tion from being evident. At least in certain known cases particular revelations are established by being declared and confirmed through a most evident and outstanding miracle of the first magnitude. Examples are available from the prophets, who experienced within themselves the evident operations of God's word and Spirit, of which they were made conscious witnesses by prophetic light. Compare also, as above, the head angel among the wayfaring spirits of paradise—to say nothing of the Blessed Virgin after the annunciation. In all cases of this kind, the liberty of faith suffered no detriment, since the mysteries published remained obscure with regard to their objective content. It is the reality of this obscurity which makes it possible for proud infidels to defend themselves with a show of respectability when they deny mysteries that are not to their personal liking. Such are the secret justice of eternal damnation for the wicked and the predestination of God's elect.²² The concrete illustration furnished by St. Thomas suffices here: "If any prophet, speaking in the Word of the Lord, were to announce a future event and work a wonder, such as restoring life to a corpse, to bolster it up, the intellect of an eyewitness would be convinced by the miraculous sign. He would know manifestly that the prophet's message is from God who does not deceive. For all that, the future event, as announced, would not be evident in itself and it would not, for that reason, forfeit the condition which would make belief in it an act of supernatural faith."

Suárez advances an opinion of his own regarding the liberty which ennoble the act of faith. He differs from DeLugo and from St. Thomas as well. Contrary to Aquinas, he holds it to be possible for one and the same thing, which in the premises is the authority of God revealing, to be an object of knowledge and of faith in the mind of the same individual, at one and the same time. In opposition to DeLugo, he maintains that the fact of revelation can be evident. He is at pains to uphold the liberty of the act of faith, by pointing out two distinct ways of adhering to a revealed truth: one is natural; the other supernatural. Demons may assent to the truth in the former manner. All that is required is the intellectual acceptance of a truth revealed, on the ground of some manifestation of divine authority. Such would be the accompaniment of miracles. A thoroughly supernatural assent would be based on divine authority as believed in. The two alternatives would leave the believer free to choose between them.

²² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2.

The position of Suárez thus outlined is incompatible with the fixed rational denial that the same thing can be an object of knowledge and faith at the same time. It is a contradiction in terms to claim that the same thing can be known, because it is clear; and simultaneously accepted on faith, because of its obscureness; that it can be seen through knowledge, and yet not seen because belief in it is a habit of faith. Surely, when faith is made to run back to the authority of God revealing in the order of grace, the truth of the revelation cannot be obvious on the natural level.

The explanation of Suárez does not touch the liberty intrinsic to the supernatural act of faith. It stops at an extrinsic liberty which regards the distinction between natural and supernatural faith indifferently. It is as though a student were to declare his freedom in electing a course of mathematics in preference to metaphysics or vice versa. It does not follow from his choice that he will or can be master, to the extent of suiting himself freely with regard to the interior assent which he will afterwards grant or refuse to the axioms of mathematics or the principles of metaphysics. He will not be free to hold honestly that twice three make seven or that a crooked line marks the shortest distance between two points.

We need go no further. As proposed from the first, this Question has threshed out sufficiently the inherent meaning of faith as a virtue; in its objective self, in its definition, in its relations with other virtues, both with those that are appetitive and those that are intellective and culminate in certitude.

QUESTION FIVE

Those Who Have Faith

Introduction

In this question St. Thomas juxtaposes extremes, to bring out their mutual opposition: 1) In their origin were man and the angels endowed with faith? 2) Were the demons so endowed? The opposition is obvious. 3) In the case of those heretics who err in one article of faith, can they possess faith in other articles? 4) Finally, among the faithful in the present order do some individuals have more faith than others?

These topics leave room for an inquiry concerning faith among the souls in purgatory and the particular sin through which faith is lost.

An ulterior effect of the articles is the great light they shed on the formal motive of infused faith. They invigorate the Thomists' interpretation of the opening article of this treatise, to the effect that the formal motive of faith is Prime Truth revealing—Prime Truth, as the thing, and itself the reason, that in faith are supernaturally accepted and believed in—the object *quo* and *quod*, which is directly attained to without discursiveness.

Article 1

At the Moment of Origin, Was Either Angel or Man Endowed with Faith?

Statement of the question. Difficulties spring up at three points: 1) Hugh of St. Victor says expressly: "From the first man knew his Creator in virtue of his state. It was not because the first man resembled present-day believers who seek God in his absence by believing; it was because God was manifest to man, he was discerned in a contemplative presence, of which man was conscious since the eye of his contemplative sight was still wide open." 2) No degree of obscurity was compatible with the state of original innocence. Darkness in the understanding is a penalty of sin. 3) The protoparent could not have received faith through human hearing since, being the first man, he was alone, with nobody to preach to him.

First conclusion. All angels, good and bad, while on probation, as well as man at first untainted by sin, had faith. This is denied by Durandus.

Scriptural Proof. *The authority of St. Paul:* the doctrine of the Apostle is derived from the most universal principle of the two credibles: "He who comes to God must believe that God is; and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). But when first established in existence, angels and man alike were in the condition of wayfarers seeking the approach to God. Having that destiny to reach God, they needed faith. The reasoning gains additional force from what follows.

Theological Proof. The only manner of manifestation that is incompatible with faith is that which causes the principal object of faith to

be seen. But before the angels on probation were either confirmed in grace or fell, and while man was in the state of original innocence, both angels and man were on a way leading to supernatural happiness. Neither angels nor man had as yet beheld Prime Truth by sight. "Known but unseen" is the condition in which Prime Truth is embraced through faith. Therefore, both the angels on probation and innocent man had faith to start out with.

The major premise is certain. Faith is concerned with things not seen. Nothing other than the internal evidence of a truth or object prevents it from being a matter of faith.

The minor premise is equally certain; for, as Aquinas declares, of the two elements that constitute faith "there is the quasi-formal one which is Prime Truth, existing superior to all natural creaturely knowledge, and also the material factor, to which we assent by our very inherence in Prime Truth." Commonly speaking, there is bound to be faith in all beings who are endowed with knowledge about God, as long as their inherence in Prime Truth persists, short of the actual attainment of future beatitude. Beatitude alone removes the last veil barring the vision of Prime Truth in its being, in its understanding, or in its utterances.

No clearer text need be looked for than the one just cited, to impart authority to our earlier contention in favor of Prime Truth so eminently revealing as the formal motive of infused faith. It surpasses the highest intelligence possible in the natural order, either in Adam the proto-parent or the angels. Faith, therefore, issues from and is exercised toward God, not only as the author and sovereign administrator of nature [a worker of miracles in the sensible order], but God the author of grace and glory, high above every form of natural cognition, created or creatable. The Salmanticenses take precedence over Cajetan in upholding this, our perspective. Furthermore, the citation clarifies the simple inherence of the faithful by their belief in mysteries, in Prime Truth itself, not discursively, but by one unique supernatural act, comprehending God both as revealer and revealed (cf. above q. 2, a. 2).

The novel intermediate understanding of the angels, introduced, if not originated by Durandus as an objection, cannot hold. The angels on probation are therein represented as possessing a knowledge, independently of faith, that God who cannot lie was nevertheless revealing to them in the form of mysteries or truths that were impenetrable. This endowment prevented them from accepting mysteries through faith.

It was something higher than faith, although inferior to beatific vision.

From this reasoning Cajetan held aloof. He maintained that evidence concerning divine veracity on the one hand, coupled with the knowledge of a factual revelation on the other were not enough to tear away the obscurity of mysteries strictly so-called. Consider, for examples, predestination, eternal punishment, and the Trinity. The angels, accordingly, embraced these secrets of God like ourselves—through faith. Faith remained possible because, in the proclamation of such truths, the connection between the subject in each case and the predicate is not evident. In addition, angels so enlightened by nature could not thereby rise to the knowledge of God revealing, with an authority belonging to him solely as the author of supernatural grace.

Two opinions current in the time of Aquinas were rejected by him: 1) Certain theologians held that angels and men were produced by creation, in an exclusively natural state. This condition would have barred supernatural faith. We have confuted this opinion on the score that it has no basis in tradition and it runs counter to a convincing array of passages from Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. Against it, nearly all theologians rally to the position of St. Thomas.¹ 2) The second opinion rejected by the Angelic Doctor is that of Hugh of St. Victor. Without detriment to his esteem for the magisterial excellence of Hugh and the weight of his authority, Thomas asserts that any form of contemplation that dispenses with the necessity of faith belongs to the other higher world, "where only supernatural truth is seen in its essence."

It follows that even the most extraordinary and highest intellectual visions, such as those recounted by St. Teresa in a subsequent epoch, belong to the order of faith. It suffices that they fall short of beatific vision, which probably was communicated to St. Paul in rapture. It is the same reasoning employed by theologians, as a common rule, who for the most part set about proving that Christ enjoyed the beatific vision when living on earth. They proceed as follows: Christ did not know of his divine personality through faith, for the only means of knowing that is higher than faith; it is the beatific vision. It results that Christ as man knew of his divine personality through the beatific vision while on earth, and that is what made the consciousness of himself complete. It kept him in a condition to state as he did to Nicodemus: "We speak what we know and we testify what we have seen" (Jn. 3:11).

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 62, a. 3; q. 95, a. 1.

It qualified him to commune with the Deity about himself vocally, for the benefit of his disciples: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me" (Jn. 17:24). Jesus is God speaking as man. He is beholding mysteries as man and not alone as God. His speech shows him to be human in what he said, as did his gesture in what he did when riding into Jerusalem on a colt, in order to fulfill a divine prophecy (cf. Jn. 12:14). Hugh of St. Victor did not claim that the angels on probation and man with original innocence enjoyed beatific vision. What he maintained lay between the knowledge of faith and beatific sight. But St. Thomas denies the existence of any such intermediate endowment.² It is easy to sum up what he says.

Holy Scripture gives us to understand that man's ultimate happiness consists in beholding the divine essence, and not in a greater or less degree of penetrative sight. All who are in heaven see God in himself, and not according to variable degrees of penetration depending on the intensity of vision. For this reason, it must be remembered that the difference between what the blessed contemplate in heaven and what they believed in on earth goes far beyond a mere comparative measure between more perfect and less perfect intuition. The difference is between actually seeing [in heaven] and not seeing at all [on earth]. Hence, the condition of Adam on the way to beatitude made it impossible for him to see God in his essence. So long as Prime Truth refrains from appearing or manifesting its essence, all truth communicated by it is an object of faith.³

This doctrine derives force from an argument previously introduced. Adam in the state of original innocence, like the angels before they were confirmed in grace, was not handicapped by the obscurity that accompanies fault or penalty. In both cases it was natural darkness, inherent in created intelligences, that intrigued them. In that respect all creation is darkness by comparison with the immensity of the Light which is divine. God dwells in "inaccessible light" in virtue of his being subsistent intelligence; or, let us say, he lives in intellectual brightness, personally subsistent and eternal.⁴

Again, faith could not have been awakened in innocent Adam by the effort of any human preacher. There was none in existence to hear exteriorly. Only interior hearing was possible, such as welcomed God's Word immediately from God, after the manner of a prophet. For a

² Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 18, a. 1.

³ Cf. *ibid.*, a. 3.

⁴ Cf. 1 Tm. 6:16.

more ample exposition of this problem see St. Thomas' *De Veritate*, Question Eighteen, Article 3.

Second conclusion. Both angels on probation and man newly created in innocence had a higher characteristic form of contemplation than humans have known since. It enabled them to grasp many more effects and phases of divine workmanship and mysteries than are within the reach of subsequent human knowledge (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 95, a. 3 ad 1).

Proof. Toward the end of the article we are following, St. Thomas says: "With reference to material truths that are proposed for belief, it happens in the present state that some of them are clearly manifest to particular believers and known because they are seen. For others, who do not see the truths in themselves, they are objects of faith. It is not surprising, therefore, that the wayfaring angels with innocent Adam, owing to their higher enlightenment, could seize more easily truths like God's existence as the author of nature, whose effects they could see on all sides and within themselves; or again, God's providence, reaching out into the tiniest details of creation—and miracles as such."⁵ Then, in face of rigorously supernatural mysteries, they penetrated them more profoundly and in a higher perspective furnished by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, that progressed according to the superior degrees of clarity that matched and animated them.

By this reasoning, Aquinas volunteers a concession to Hugh of St. Victor, inasmuch as the wayfaring angels and innocent man were not under the necessity of seeking an habitually absent God, as we are. God was nearer to them, through the light of wisdom, nearer than he comes to the rank and file of the faithful. And yet, he was not present to them as he is to the blessed, through the light of glory. It was through faith and not vision that they knew the principal phases of the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. This fact kept them in the rank of believers, notwithstanding the sublime heights in which they flourished because of their characteristic contemplativeness.⁶ St. Paul describes the Christian Church as an actual medium of divine instruction, through wisdom, for principalities and powers in heavenly station (cf. Eph. 3:10).

⁵ Cf. above, q. 1, a. 5; q. 2, a. 4 ad 2.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 57, a. 5 ad 3; q. 64, a. 1 ad 4; q. 117, a. 2 ad 1; IIIa, q. 1, a. 3 ad 5.

Corollary I. Not even if the most exalted mystic contemplation, outside the beatific vision, flashed and caught in rapture, is God seen as he is by immediate perception. The validity of this teaching is confirmed by a declaration of the Council of Vienne suppressing the fancy of the Beguards to this effect: "The soul is not in need of the light of glory, either to see God or to enjoy his presence, after the manner of the blessed" (Denz. 475).

Corollary II. The sublimity of our faith is thus apparent. In the order of knowledge there is nothing superior to it, outside the beatific vision. Infused faith accordingly ranks immensely above the natural cognition of the highest angelic spirit.

Corollary III. Infused faith is of one and the same species in the angels on probation and in man. It has the same formal object *quo* and *quod*. The difference between the two grades of being, angelic and human, is material only, in this respect. Supernatural mysteries commanding belief are communicated to the wayfaring angels in the form of infused ideas such as the angels use naturally. Man, on the other hand, must receive them through concepts abstracted from phantasms. But, as St. Thomas observes, of the two things infused as a unit, "the light is more important than the idea" which it manifests.⁷ The reason lies in the purpose of the judgment that develops from both. It is relatively a completion in the order of cognition. What causes an acquired human idea and an infused idea, such as the angels are used to, to become related to the knowledge of supernatural mysteries, is the luster shed upon both by the infusion of the light of faith. "Phantasms and intellectual concepts are ordained to represent intelligible truths," asserts St. Thomas, "but if the truths exceed human intelligence, the help of supernatural light is a necessity."

Corollary IV. The infused faith of the Blessed Virgin was far above the infused faith possessed by the highest of all angels on probation. The initial fullness of grace that was Mary's privilege from the instant of her Immaculate Conception, towered high above the final graces that will, in the end, have enriched all saints and all angels put together. Just as adamant is reputed to have in itself more hardness than tons of other stones—or better, just as St. Thomas had more genius than all his commentators combined—or the power of a king comprehends more than the manifold powers delegated to all his ministers—so also

⁷ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 173, a. 2.

Mary's fullness of grace challenges all comparisons. And this is saying nothing of the corresponding degrees and accompaniments of sanctifying grace and charity of which we propose to treat in Article 4.

Article 2

Do Demons Have Faith?

This article throws light in reverse, so to speak, on the supernatural essence of our faith. The content holds for all the reprobate.

Statement of the question. A negative answer might seem to be the true one: 1) St. Augustine avers that "faith has its consistency in the will of those who believe." This can only be a good will. But demons are angels who turned bad by abandoning good will. Faith is no longer possible for them. 2) Faith is a gift of divine grace. But the demons forfeited all gratuitous gifts from God by their unforgivable sin. 3) If there were faith in the demons, certain men would be capable of a wickedness greater than theirs; namely, the sin of unbelief. This would be incongruous.

Nevertheless, St. James says expressly in his epistle that "the devils believe and tremble" (Jas. 2:19). The charge needs to be understood in its context. St. James is inculcating that Christian "faith without works" [to back it up] is sterile. It is like love of neighbor expressed only in words. It is fruitless. It is no better than the idle, useless faith of demons. The Apostle's sense is clear (cf. Jas. 2:14-19).

"What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Shall faith be able to save him? If a brother or sister be in need of clothing and in want of daily food, and one of you say to them: go in peace, get warm and be filled, without giving them their bodily needs, what shall it profit? So faith also, if it has no works, is dead in itself. But some man will say: You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by works. You believe that there is one God. You do well: but the devils believe and they tremble. . . . Do you see? By works is a man justified and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:14-24).

At first glance St. James seems to be at variance with St. Paul, who thus addressed the Romans: "We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law" (Rom. 3:28); "If Abraham were justified

by works, he had whereof to glory, but not before God" (Rom. 4:2). The two apostles, however, are far from contradicting each other. St. Paul was intent on repudiating particular works and observances that were falsely alleged to be still binding in virtue of the Mosaic law; whereas St. James was pleading for the vitalization of nude faith through deeds of charity. St. Paul's constant theme was the sufficiency of living faith. St. James was denouncing the insufficiency of dead faith—faith despoiled of fruits that charity alone could produce. The distinction induced Alexander of Hales and Salmeron to defend the possession by demons of infused faith that was dead and unformed. Durandus argued: If the angels had infused faith while on trial, the demons who rebelled would have retained it stripped of charity. As a matter of fact, what Durandus believed the angels on trial to have been endowed with was not faith at all, but a clear contemplation of God. This stand is what made him an opponent of St. Thomas in conjunction with Hugh of St. Victor, as we have sufficiently discussed in the preceding article. We ourselves are aligned with the Carmelites of Salamanca.

Solution of St. Thomas. In demons and the disembodied souls of reprobate men, there are no remains of infused supernatural faith; but only an acquired faith, produced by the natural perspicacity of the intellect and forced upon those who have it by the evidence of signs. This doctrine, commonly admitted by the Thomists, is sustained by Suárez, Ripalda, and Castillo, the last of whom ascribes it also to St. Bonaventure. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries theologians were herein so concordant that Suárez labelled the contrary views "temerarious." Bañez added stronger epithets, such as false, dangerous, and smacking of error.

Conclusion. Our conclusion has two parts which we shall consider separately.

Part I: Infused faith, even unformed, no longer remains in demons nor in reprobate souls. In the first two objections formulated by St. Thomas there is the traditional proof, a gloss based on authority. The demons forfeited gratuitous supernatural gifts when they sinned. But infused faith, even when informed, is a gratuitous benefit. Therefore, rebel spirits lost it.

This argument has special force when there is question of gratuitous endowments that have no particular reference to the neighbor's utility. Such are graces *gratis datae*; also the indelible sacerdotal character, whose purpose is the advancement of supernatural beatitude, for which

the reprobate do not and cannot hope or qualify. But faith, even when unformed, belonging as it does to the same species as faith that is alive, is a gratuitous gift, ordained by its nature to promote supernatural beatitude. Therefore, it has no place in the damned. The accustomed definition of faith as the "substance of things to be hoped for," and its received descriptions as the "beginning of salvation," the "root of justification," exclude it from the reprobates who hope not for these things—nor can they.

A pious movement of the will is required for supernatural faith. There must be in the believer a degree of affective credulousness that contacts Prime Truth interiorly revealing. But in demons and reprobate men there is no room left for a pious motion in the will. All good will has ceased. Being accursed they are irrevocably fixed in evil ways. They may at times influence or be influenced by some good object viewed at close range; but even then they are more dominated by the perversity with which they thus ensnare. They never repent. They have no intention of emerging from their wickedness. As the Psalmist declares: "The pride of those who hate [God] ascends continually" (Ps. 73:23).

What is here said in express terms about the faith of demons has a direct connection with the query which St. Thomas raises and answers in the *Summa*: "Whether the Will of the Demons is Obstinate in Evil" (Ia, q. 64, a. 2). The inflexibility of a fallen angel is due to the ultimate darkening of its intellect through the complete withdrawal of infused supernatural faith.

Part II: What remains in demons and the damned is a faith gained through the natural perspicacity of the intellect, which in a degree is forced upon them through the inevitable evidence of signs. In replying to objections, Aquinas clarifies this position, after stating it toward the end of the body of the article. The faith acquired by the reprobate concerns true mysteries, which retain the obscurity which they have, even when revealed. That is enough to dignify their assent with the name of faith. In witnessing miracles, which spirits can detect much more easily than living human beings, they can and have to assent to the mysteries more firmly in the premises. The result is an increase of torture at perceiving that the signs of faith are so obvious. They must believe in spite of themselves, and because of that compulsion, their malice never shrinks. This is why St. James warns: "They believe and

they tremble." Madly do they wish they could deny, but in vain. The signs they see leave no alternative. They assent.

First query. What is the formal motive in the acquired faith of demons?

Replies. 1. It is not identical with the formal motive of infused faith. The specification of a habit is effected by its formal object. But no acquired faith is of the same species as faith that is infused. "To believe," explains St. Thomas, "is predicated equivocally of the faithful on earth and demons." Demons have no equipment corresponding to "the infused light of grace which qualifies the faithful to believe" supernaturally.

2. In the certitude that forces the demons to believe, the final analysis lies in the natural evidence of miracles coupled with the truth that God cannot be deceived, nor can he deceive. Demons, accordingly, do not assent to mysteries because of the authority of God as author of grace; but only because of the miracles they behold. Too well do they know that God the Creator and almighty Ruler of nature can never utter falsity.¹ "A reason that induces one to believe can originate in some created thing which functions as a sign, and moves the observer to assent to some belief about God or other things." It can also issue from uncreated Truth. The latter case is illustrated by the faith we exercise toward things divinely communicated to us through the ministers of the Church.

In the first instance, faith induces the believer to yield to a position because nothing seems to stand against it; but in the second, there is no compulsion brought to bear upon the intellect. The inclination to believe carries through one's own free choice. St. Thomas points out that faith of the first kind is what demons have. It accumulates from the resourcefulness of their natural knowledge and acquaintanceship with miracles. With their subtleness of perception devils discern better than we do that miracles are superior to natural processes; this fact itself forces them to believe what entirely surpasses the limits of their own natural understanding. This forcing is not what happens when the motive of belief is supernatural and infused.

For Aquinas, therefore, the reason inducing devils to believe is not the action of uncreated Truth revealing. It is a created cause. Demons do not utilize divine Truth revealing as the medium to which they are

¹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3.

immediately subordinated, in their ability to believe supernaturally. They have no inherence in Truth as a divine communication. And in being moved to believe by the evidence of created signs only, it stands to reason that the sphere of their faith is the sphere of the signs. Its formal object is encompassed by the natural order. How superior is the ultimate analysis of faith infused! Formally and intrinsically the infusion is an act of God, welcomed because of the authority wielded by God in making a revelation as author of grace. The evidence of miracles is secondary. It is an accessory, extrinsic and material.

Hence, the great difference in faith as ascribed to demons and as possessed by the faithful. The usage is equivocal but it lends itself to bringing out the exalted character of infused faith, which is supernatural in substance, in virtue of its formal specification. But supernatural, infused faith would be devoid of reality, for want of conscious subjective contact, were it not for an antecedent elevation communicated to the mind through faith's own infused light.²

Second query. In what way do the demons attain to strictly supernatural mysteries like the Trinity, the Incarnation, and life eternal?

Reply of the Thomists. John of St. Thomas may be introduced as representing Thomists.³ Devils do not attain to the aforesaid essentially supernatural mysteries in a formal way. They have only a material grip on them as truths that God has spoken; which truths they perceive, cannot be demonstrated.⁴ Their status may be illustrated by any number of analogies: it is dog-like, that is to say, similar to the handicap of a canine that can distinguish human speech materially as such, without the ability to tell the rational sense of what is uttered. Making allowance for a proportion, the devils' handicap is comparable to tone deafness. A person so afflicted is not exactly deaf, for he really hears the symphony of Beethoven to which he is listening. Radically, however, he is without a musical ear and the spirit of the symphony conveyed by the tones escapes him. A youthful beginner in metaphysics may, in some such way, learn the metaphysical principle of final causality, namely, "Every agent operates for a given end." He is taught about it by means of sensible examples: an axe is made for chopping; a knife for cutting; a top to amuse by spinning. Nevertheless, he is only being led by the hand, as long as he remains intellectually disqualified to

² Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Gratia*, tr. XIV, disp. 3, dub. 3, sec. 3.

³ *De Gratia*, disp. 20, a. 1, Solutiones objectionum.

⁴ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 503; Salmanticenses, *De Fide*, disp. 8, dub. 2, n. 25; *De Gratia*, disp. 3, dub. 3, sec. 3.

seize directly upon the absolute necessity and intrinsic universality of the principle as a principle. He may, however, be won over to holding that material agents all tend to produce some definite end. He grasps the resemblance between nature's developments and those of human art. It strikes his fancy. But he lacks the *intuition* to perceive the causal processes or influx of dominant ends just as soon as their agents lapse by losing their appeal to what otherwise impresses him as merely wonderful. Once he realizes the metaphysical definitions and distinction between action and purpose, deed and end, he gains possession of a new concept, convincing him that every action has an intentional character related to an end, either consciously or unconsciously—failing which, any action would have to produce everything that is produced, or else produce nothing at all.⁵

In these defective material ways, demons may be said to assent to revelation and supernatural mysteries. Every fallen angel knows that God is truthful as the author of nature; that alleged facts of revelation are enforced by miracles; that a definition of dogma is in the form of propositions, whose terms have a natural sense in their relation as subject and predicate; and that the word "it is (so)," by virtue of a natural light, manifests the signs or loosely styled "evidences" of revelation.

In a quite opposite way the faithful believer endowed with faith by an infusion of light into his soul, attains infallibly to the experience of an interior revelation. His gift is more than a manifestation dependent upon signs. It proceeds directly from God as the author of grace, proposing what he reveals, through Holy Church, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. It is because of such belief in revelation that a person with faith avows: "It is the truth," no matter what dogma may be in question. All he needs to be sure of in the premises is that the light of faith infused into him is shining squarely on to the precise subject and predicate with which a dogma has been defined. This disposition amounts to a formal assent to the mysteries revealed. The resultant faith in them does not derive its vigor lineally from the evidence of the first principle of human reason, but from the uncreated light that belongs to God. What St. Paul says of the sensual or animal man holds equally of devils: "He perceives not the things that are of the Spirit of God. It is foolishness to him. He cannot understand" (1 Cor. 2:14). There is no proportion between the acquired knowledge of the reprobate, called faith, and the infused faith of believers, because of the

⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 44, a. 4.

opposition growing out of the diversity between their formal motives and objects on levels that never converge, except in name. This is why we have called the definition and sense of "faith," as applied to men and demons, equivocal.⁶

Third query. Are the demons absolutely forced to believe, so that they have no liberty left?

Reply. The more approved traditional opinion holds that demoniacal faith is, so to speak, more or less compulsory. Another balancing description is found with this one in St. Thomas. It is a faith "that does not in every respect spring from free choice."⁷ It would be folly for the demons to deny the truth of the Gospel. They prefer to believe, however reluctantly. They are too wise to indulge foolishness to the contrary. But many individual mysteries they find inscrutable, such as predestination and the eternity of punishment in contrast.

Supplemental explanations. The obscurity, enhanced by the contrast of these gospel truths, guarantees liberty of a certain kind to demons and reprobate human souls. In a certain sense they are compelled to believe and in a certain sense they are free. It is like the casting of a cargo of merchandise into the sea, on the part of sailors who are free; but who, to keep on the safe side in avoiding shipwreck, feel compelled so to protect their vessel. They place a higher estimate on their own lives than on the property of patrons. A miser, however, might not be so influenced if the cargo were his own.

Demons, like the elite among heretics, excel in natural intelligence. Proudhon may be singled out among the enemies of the Church as an example. He wrote: "The Revolution believes in humanity. The Church believes in God. The Church is the most dazzling manifestation of the divine essence. In the midst of (religious) sects she is the only one that knows how to adore."⁸

First doubt. St. James testifies that "the demons believe and tremble" (Jas. 2:19).

Reply. Does the Apostle mean that devils have a faith that is infused and kept active by a pious disposition in the will? Not at all. Is he speaking of a faith they are forced into, because it would be folly for them to deny signs that are so convincing? Yes. But there is something worse than persuasive signs sealing their immobility. It is the experi-

⁶ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 475.

⁷ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3.

⁸ The supplementary explanation is incorporated from the author's footnotes.

ence of misery at the apprehension of an avenging God. The Apostle associates unformed faith, which is infused, with acquired faith to which demons naturally assent because both those kinds of faith are sterile. It is not within his sphere to treat of the intimate difference that separates all infused gifts from all natural endowments, even when, like faith, they go by the same name.

Second doubt. The only effectual way in which infused faith is lost is through the deliberate sin of unbelief. But devils have been damned for their pride, not for their unbelief. Therefore, they have not lost infused faith which they had from their creation.

Reply. The major calls for a distinction. The exclusive cause of forfeiting the faith is the sin of unbelief among wayfarers, but not among beings or spirits who have already reached their goal. All the reprobate have forfeited faith, through their disqualification to elicit any further interior movements of piety in the will. This degrading has been accomplished by the withdrawal of divine mercy which originally made the fostering of piety possible.

Third doubt. But the indelible character of certain sacraments survives in human souls that are lost. What is to prevent the survival of infused faith?

Reply. The comparison is invalid. Faith is the beginning of salvation. The work of salvation has faith for its essential basis. The sacramental characters are indelible marks only. They are potencies that lend themselves indifferently to the performance of either good or evil. They make good better, and evil worse; as when a wicked priest abuses his priestly character by consecrating validly, yet sinfully.

Sacramental branding operates like its military counterpart. It lasts over in the vanquished to their confusion. It subsists in victors for their glory. It survives permanently in the reprobate as truly as in the blessed. Faith is more like the arms and accoutrement of which the conquered are despoiled. The character can never be destroyed by sin. Faith can be and is destroyed, as in infidels. So it turns out that in hell the reprobate from among the faithful are distinguished from infidels who were never baptized by the sacramental character. More serious punishment is measured out to them because of it, other things remaining unchanged.

Fourth doubt. St. Thomas says expressly, after describing the difference between faith and hope, that unformed faith runs a better chance of remaining in the damned than hope. Language of the kind implies

that the continuance of unformed faith in reprobate souls is not a repugnant idea.⁹

Reply. The ambiguous use of the term "unformed" is misleading here. If faith without charity is "unformed," acquired natural faith is more so, in being vacuous. Aquinas is not writing about any relic of infused faith, as infused, lasting over in hell. He is merely indicating that, by comparison with hope, a survival of some relic of faith in hell is conceptually less impossible than any survival of hope. Indeed, reprobate men are like the demons in two respects. Both can and do acquire a persuasive natural faith; but hope has utterly perished, natural as well as supernatural. The object of hope is some good, apprehended as obtainable in the future. Acquired faith turns the absence of such a concept into torture.

Solution of Queries

First query. In the case of men who die without having received the gift of faith, do they gain possession of an acquired faith such as demons have?

Reply. Certainly, but it is the unfolding of events or the penalties they endure that instructs them, and not any learning destined for their improvement, such as is available before death seals each one's fate. They are quite aware that God destined the entire human race for a supernatural goal. And they come to the knowledge of Christ so that they play a part of their own in the panoramic pageant preached by St. Paul to the Philippians: "God has exalted him and has given him a name that is above all names: that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bend of those who are in heaven on earth and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9-10).

Second query. Is it possible for demons, now and then, to sin against faith by eliciting acts that are contrary to it?

Reply. Paludianus or Peter à Palude, an outspoken antagonist of Durandus, agrees with the Salmanticenses in answering affirmatively. Their response claims more than a slight probability. It is very probable that when reprobate spirits are confronted by those particular mysteries of faith whose signs are not too patent, and may even be elusive, they can be driven into opposition against them; for the obvious reason

⁹ See below, our own q. 18, art. 3, ad 2; Cajetan's contribution to the same theme is pertinent.

that their disposition to be iniquitous maddens them into committing all sins left within their power.

As for authentic historical knowledge, demons are not ignorant of whatever the Church has defined.

Third query. Does faith remain in the souls of the blessed?

Reply. No: it cannot.¹⁰ Along the way to heaven the formal object *quod* of faith is Prime Truth, precisely as unseen; but beyond the veil, Prime Truth is seen intuitively, or, in the language of ordinary piety, "face to face." In the rapture of St. Paul, the Apostle was favored with a flash vision of God's essence. The suddenness of the experience left no time for an act of faith, and yet, it did not rob the Apostle of his abiding habit of faith. The permanence of the beatific vision obliterates the habit of believing, completely and permanently.

Fourth query. Does faith remain in purgatory?

Reply. Assuredly it does. As for the primitive patriarchs in limbo, so also now does the same mystery work in the suffering souls. The truths of faith are wrapped up in mysteries that remain obscure. Add to this the fact that the faithful departed are confirmed in hope, which could not be without faith underlying their hope.

Article 3

Can a Pertinacious Disbeliever in One Article of Faith Have Lifeless Faith in the Other Articles?

This article of the *Summa* throws light on the Thomistic doctrine concerning the formal motive of faith. The disbeliever in question is one who deliberately withholds his assent from a dogma after it has been sufficiently explained. His pertinacity may take the form of open denial or be hidden beneath some alleged protestation of nonacceptance. The two positions are: first, "it is not true"; secondly, "I am non-committal."

Statement of the question. Formal heresy rises or falls here. Every form of heresy appears to profess something akin to infused faith, affecting particular doctrines. 1) Such faith at best would be lifeless or unformed. Were that not the case, it would follow from the pretense

¹⁰ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 67, a. 3.

that the understanding of heretics is stronger than that of Catholics, since the latter need constant help to keep believing rightly about the same mysteries. 2) In geometry an adept may be in ignorance about a particular theorem of Euclid or he may be in error about its implications. In neither case need he lose his standing as an authoritative geometer. He knows his science too well. May not the same be true of a heretic? 3) A man may violate one or another commandment without becoming disobedient on principle to the whole Decalogue. Faith seems to be similar. Discrimination about its mysteries does not preclude the virtue as such.

Arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, the following doctrine is conclusive: In a heretic who pertinaciously withholds his belief in any one article known to be of faith, infused faith no longer remains, whether unformed by charity or lifeless. It does not matter what other articles he chooses to believe in.

This is a common tenet among theologians. Besides St. Thomas and the Thomists, its upholders include Scotus, Suárez, and Gabriel Biel. Durandus is the solitary opponent. He says: It is probable that a heretic, who dissents from some one article of faith nevertheless retains infused faith in other articles. The admission amounts to juxtaposing contrary habits and making them operative in the same subject simultaneously. A faithful heretic is a chimera. Durandus betrays his lack of understanding for the meaning, to say nothing of the importance, of a formal object in faith. The Wirceburgenses hold that a believer may willfully deny some very difficult dogma of faith, without the forfeiture of infused faith in doctrines easier to grasp.

Proof from tradition. The Council of Trent says: "It must be asserted that, after the grace of justification has been received"—in other words, when one is in the state of sanctifying grace—"the grace is lost, not only by the sin of unbelief, which extinguishes faith, but by the commission of any mortal sin whatever" (Denz. 808). It is of no consequence that the Council is not directly teaching in this instance. The clauses cited could not have been dropped, incidentally or accidentally, like an unimportant parenthesis. There can be no inadvertence in the correct formulation of a proposition whose content is most certain and backed up by the unwavering adherence of theologians.

It is pertinent to subjoin the condemnation of related errors listed in the Syllabus of Pope Pius IX. One error is that "Protestantism is only one other form of the true Christian religion, in which man is given the

ability to please God, the same as in the Catholic Church" (Denz. 1718). A strategic error accompanies the preceding, namely: "The Church does not possess the power to define dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only one that is true" (Denz. 1721).

"There is no wonder," say the Salmanticenses, "in Báñez having censured the opinion of Durandus as temerarious and too near the borderline of error. Suárez was less benignant in declaring that it cannot be defended short of error."

Patristic usage long ago inaugurated the attitude since canonized in this manner by maintaining that formal heretics are Christians in name only. To be a Christian, strictly so-called, one needs to possess true theological faith. Only by the loss of theological faith is de-Christianization possible.

Theological Proof. Theological reasoning finds favor in St. Thomas' *sed contra*. Just as one mortal sin robs the soul of charity or God-love, so also disbelief in a single article of faith deprives it of supernatural faith. It is the law of contrariety working out consistently in both cases. Confirmation of this comparative argument is furnished in the body of the article whence we immediately borrow.

Proof from the Analysis of Properties. Once a formal object or formal motive is removed or changed, the habit and act that were specified by it cease. But when a heretic willfully refuses to believe any one truth after it has been sufficiently propounded as of faith, he thereupon rescinds his assent to the formal object *quo*, which affects faith as a whole, both with regard to its habit and its acts. Therefore, granting that a heretic disbelieves any one article of faith, by so doing he forfeits the infused faith which is necessary to make him a Christian believer of any and all other articles to which he continues wedded.

Aquinas furnishes the thought which proves the major: "The species of any human habit whatever depends on the formal factor in its object. Remove that factor and the species is no longer the same." This principle is of tremendous import because of the light it casts on the whole teaching of theology concerning the virtues, whether acquired or infused, together with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. All virtues, whether belonging to natural culture or infused, are distinguished by their formal object.¹

The minor premise has its soundness from Prime Truth revealing. The discernment of what it reveals is safeguarded in the Scriptures,

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4.

which are divinely inspired, and the doctrine of the Church, assisted by the Holy Ghost in her infallible guardianship and declaration of what the deposit of faith contains. The containment thus circumscribed by Scripture and tradition involves: (1) the formal motive of faith, which is God's authority certifying what he communicated as the author of grace; (2) the material content of Scripture and tradition as the object *quod* or sum total of all that is to be believed—wherefore its designation as a body of truths divinely deposited; (3) a condition for transmission *sine qua non*, namely, the infallible proposal of revealed truth by the Church that has been empowered to function proximately as the expository norm of faith and lineal successor to the prophets who, in pre-Christian times, were divinely commissioned messengers for those to whom they spoke.

The second and third requirements for faith indicated here have themselves been revealed for what they are. Scripture and tradition have been divinely authenticated as embodying the deposit of faith. And the Church is kept infallible to maintain the custody and official declaration of what is in the deposit.

From this it follows that breaking with the Church over anything that it declares to be binding in faith is not merely impugning the condition *sine qua non* of true faith, it also compromises the intellectual assent to the formal motive of faith. Rather, it rejects the authority of God in revealing the infallibility of the Church, which proceeds from Prime Truth as its origin and originator. There is no getting around or away from St. Thomas' clear conclusion; in his own words it runs: "Whoever, thinking otherwise, does not cling to the doctrine of the Church as the infallible and divine rule proceeding from Prime Truth, manifested in the Sacred Writings, is devoid of the habit of faith."

First corollary. Invincible ignorance aside, whoever, in bad faith, pertinaciously disbelieves a particular article of faith, and yet pretends to believe other articles, is wedded to those preferred fragments of truth, not through a faith that is infused, but by personal opinion only, such as is fostered by self-centered judgment and self-will. In the first place, he is deprived of infused faith, because whoever sticks fast to the authority of Prime Truth revealing what is infallibly proposed by the Church, must consistently believe in all truths which are taught by the Church as belonging to revelation. In the second place, the alleged faith of a formal heretic in the doctrines he professes is nothing more than an exercise of self-centered judgment and self-will. He is stand-

ing in judgment on the Church's authority. In what she teaches, he pleases himself as to what he holds to and what he repudiates. This is not the same thing as identifying himself with the doctrine she proposes on the grounds that it is all divine. It is arrogant self-will. There is no loyal disposition to be led by the Church's teaching. Further consideration will be devoted to this attitude under the headings of *pertinacity and heresy*.²

The disposition of a pertinacious or stubborn heretic, when brought face to face with supernatural truths—the ones he likes—is comparable to that of a skeptic in philosophy who, in utterly discounting the principle of noncontradiction, and thereby undermining the compelling force of human reason, nevertheless revels in natural truths at random. He can no longer accept these or any truths as necessary. The best he can do is to bargain with them as contingencies. His mental process is the maneuvering of an arbitrary play of opinions, nothing more. He has not enough intellectual vigor to be convinced of a principle like *Cogito, ergo sum*—"thinking convinces me that I am." Doubting as he does the real value and applicability of the principle of noncontradiction, he lacks the stamina to hold it. As a consequence, his concepts are in conflict. They can never be braced up. It may always be that this or other thing—anything in short—may be or may not be at the same time that which hypnotizes his fantastic vision. The same is true of any operation, even his own thinking—and thinking on this matter rather than any other, even his own existence—and that is saying nothing of existence itself! Such a serpentine frame of mind is on the road to absolute nihilism which, at bottom, involves the denial of real being or *ens* of any kind. Logically, no fixed terms are left for the construction of the principle of noncontradiction, nor for its denial either, nor for the logic that rationalizes this way.

Such sensitized dreaming recalls the description of a German idealist who held: "The process of thinking affecting my brains is like a shower in my home." For him thinking was not a personal vital act, but an invasion—an impersonal experience. For the purpose of our comparison, once the principle of noncontradiction dwindles into valuelessness and is ignored, our unsubstantial thinker could be in a quandary as to whether he were thinking or not, whether brains really were

² Cf. below, q. 11, a. 2. The reasoning we have submitted is that of St. Augustine against the Manicheans, *Contra Faustum*, Bk. XVII, chap. 3. St. Thomas formulates it as objection 1, making it a key to the solution of objections 2 and 3.

brains or whether anything he called his own could be his, even his way of thinking [in case he had brains!]. A truly pathetic upshot of absolute nihilism, if it were a metaphysical possibility, would be to function as Aristotle and Spinoza claimed it should, namely, to lapse into silence and wind up by talking no more. Having denied the formal object *quo* that governs and imparts stability to human reason, one has blinded himself to the perception of what makes the first of all rational first principles self-evident.

The plight of a heretic resembles that of a skeptic in philosophy. He prefers to define heresy as the freedom of choice exercised by one who suits himself as to what part of the deposit of faith he commits himself to, and what part he rejects. A mobile position of this kind means the nonacceptance of the formal motive of faith. Similarly, those who are bent on accepting absurdities and hold to a progressive ascending evolution in nature, ingrained in species themselves, are compelled, like Hegel, to deny objective value to the principle of noncontradiction and to all other truths dependent on it. This is a terrific arraignment of liberalism which has no concern in preserving faith in its integrity. Liberalism mangles faith by upholding what it arbitrarily adjudges to be the essential factors or "fundamentals of faith" through its own autonomous decisions.

There are indeed many channels, for knowledge and science usurps great freedom of preference. It may adopt certain tenets and firmly and peremptorily eliminate or discard others. Not so with faith. The only channel or means for its transmission and communication is God's authority through revelation. To depart from revelation is disastrous. It is blinding to weigh the disaster, for it is no different from the denial in geometry of the ultimate property of the circle, all because its prior properties are fixed and demonstrable. Circle measurement, just because of its enigmatic proportions, is a challenge in the natural order only. Faith floods the soul as an atmosphere with a simple supernatural impact. It is present or absent. It qualifies for glory without a substitute.

Corollary II. The heretic we are envisioning seizes upon the supernatural mysteries of his personal option, in a material sense only. To become imbued with faith in them formally and supernaturally, he would need, as St. Thomas assents, "to inhere simply [without any reservation] in Prime Truth; and to do that, the help of an infused habit of faith would be indispensable."

Parenthetically, a stand must be taken here against Molina, Billot, and others. To inhere in the formal motive of faith, Aquinas does not admit the sufficiency of natural intelligence wedding the Gospel historically through good will, after due scrutiny and analysis, because of its confirmation through miracles. Over and above, or even without the ability to enact such a program, grace is imperative. Only when grace has been infused and begins to operate can a person believe in a manner profitable to salvation.

Heretics are in the lurch. They are satisfied with mutilated truths by which they allegedly brace themselves; but blind faith of this kind is no better than that of demons. It touches the material formulas of supernatural mysteries, the letter without the spirit. It conveys human concepts only. Such faith is like a lamp whose workmanship may be reputed perfect; but it is without oil or flame or power. It cannot turn itself on. A pathetic warning of Pope Leo XIII covers the sorry situation. It was addressed to scriptural exegetes: ³ "Let the Catholic interpreter bear in mind what our forebears so frequently insisted upon in their writings; namely, that the incorrupt sense of Holy Writ cannot be found anywhere else outside the Church and that it cannot be passed on by persons devoid of true faith. Without true faith the marrow of Scripture cannot be reached. Rodents can only gnaw at the husk."⁴

Corollary III. A theologian who turns heretic loses the habit of theology through his apostasy. With the forfeiture or rejection of the formal motive of sacred theology, he cannot retain his former share of the virtual revelation that constitutes it. Theological ideas may linger in his mind, but they have been organically wrenched away from Prime Truth. They have ceased to be properly coordinated with the true principle or order to which they should be attached.⁵ They are weighed according to the self-complacent spirit of a particular sect.

Corollary IV. The true history of the Church cannot be written with integrity by any but a Catholic.⁶ A historian who is an avowed heretic has it within his ability to piece together many parts of the Church's history; but the real spirit of the Church's life lies beyond his reach. He is competent to describe glowingly the excellences of the beautifully-colored cathedral windows in their architectural setting viewed from outside. But he needs to enter into and study the interior richness

³ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, n. 17.

⁴ *De Revelatione*, I, p. 513.

⁵ Cf. *loc. cit.*

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 514.

of the same symbolic windows, bathed differently in the light, and related for believers with heavenly mysteries depicted on them, to enliven the heart and spirit of worshipers beyond the hope of all outsiders to discern.

Solution of Objections

The following objections have been put forward, some by Durandus, some by liberals, and other by heretics.

First objection. The heretic holds aloof from a particular article of faith, not because God could make a mistake in revealing, but because he fails to see that the said article has been revealed. He accepts other articles because he perceives they have been revealed. He does not, therefore, deny God's authority as revealer, but only the Church's authority as arbiter. His only reason for believing what he does runs back to his infused faith, even though it is not Catholic faith. He believes as did Adam, Abraham, and Melchisedech, without the intervention exercised by the Church.

Reply. Such contentions might pass as truth, if personal inspiration, the outcome of private judgment, were the proximate rule of faith; but Christ willed, and proclaimed his will, to make only the Catholic Church the proximate rule of faith. Whoever, therefore, becomes aware of the Church's function thus revealed, and willfully turns away from Catholic faith, is not merely breaking a necessary link in the chain of faith, he is deliberately ignoring in practice the formal motive of infused faith, precisely as infused and not merely as Catholic. [This is why a convert from Protestantism may make an excellent Catholic; whereas a pervert from Catholicism can never make a good "Protestant Christian."]

It is easy to corroborate this thesis. Granting that the heretic accepts the faith he has as an infused gift, the fact comports a spiritual disposition which remotely influences him to believe all that the Church proposes as revelation, once he learns that the infallibility of the Church has been revealed and must be abided by.

But what reason can an obstinate heretic furnish for standing in judgment on the articles of faith and claiming that this or that article has not been revealed, whereas other articles have been? The attitude must be put down as private judgment or self-will, ranking ahead of the judgment of the Church and invading the Church's rights.

The foolhardy allegation that, by denying one specific doctrine the

defendant has no intention to throw aside what Prime Truth reveals, runs parallel with the conduct of an adulterer who decides that all he wants really is human pleasure. "I have no intention to offend God"—so he avers—yet he violates a law of God that imposes a grave obligation in conscience. Talk as he will, his preference is for the creature, through creature-indulgence, and not for God. "To serve the creature rather than the Creator" in such wise, turned professedly wise pagans into fools certified St. Paul to the Romans (cf. Rom. 1:21-25). A formal heretic is no better off. He prefers his own judgment to the truth of God revealing.

Second objection. Faith is an integral whole embracing many parts. Articles are its parts. But no Christian sect or heretic repudiates the faith in its completeness, as here presented. Therefore, heresy is "compatible with faith in the parts which it retains."

Reply. The major must not be swallowed whole. The material elements in faith do, in fact, coalesce into an integral body of beliefs. But the formal motive of faith is indivisible; and the habit of true faith cannot stand without it. Rather, it stands through it and because of it. The minor needs to be distinguished accordingly. Many things have been revealed by God, and all serve to integrate one definite unit as an organic whole. But what makes the whole organic is the solitary formal motive, on account of which they are all believed. This one formal motive unifies the habit which makes faith a virtue. It keeps faith unique and simplified with a quality exclusively specific. None but this genuinely infused virtue brings with it the inclination to assent to numerous truths for one and the same invariable, because indivisible, motive. In the case of a formal heretic, the structure of material articles is worthless. The entire and integral infused habit has perished.

Third objection. Examples seem to support the contrary. When Christ was buried, the apostles, being scandalized, lost faith in him for three days; yet, their faith in other mysteries remained the same as ever. What Christ upbraided them for after his resurrection was the "incredulity and hardness of heart" that kept them from believing "those who had seen him after he was risen again" (Mk. 16:14). His reproof to Thomas was to the point: "Be not incredulous, but believing" (Jn. 20:27). Similarly, when Moses doubted, in the desert, that water would flow from a rock, and Zachary momentarily disbelieved in the future birth of his son, neither one was deprived of the infused faith they had in other mysteries.

Thomists answer: the shock of the apostles while Christ lay dead

did indeed keep them from confessing him openly; but there is no proof that they denied him interiorly—in their hearts. Being weak or “of little faith,” without a real denial of faith, they could have been cruelly tossed about interiorly with temptations; but the experience would be without incurring guilt, such as constitutes a mortal sin against faith. Their pathetic condition was quite opposite to that of pertinacity in denying a definite article of faith, sufficiently manifest as a revealed truth. Their “slowness in believing” what honest witnesses testified, was censured by our Lord as culpable.

We might style it a venial sin against faith under the circumstances; but this was poles away from death-breeding pertinaciousness. The same verdict fits the cases of Moses and Zachary.

Fourth objection. In dealing with a heretical Jew, St. Augustine addressed him as follows: “Continue to believe in the resurrection of the dead, as you have believed in the past. Only believe henceforward that Christ has risen from the dead.”⁷ Clearly, St. Augustine implied that the Jew had true faith.

Reply. The Jew referred to may either have had infused faith—in which case he could not have been pertinacious as a heretic—or he may have been pertinacious. In the latter supposition his faith would have been acquired naturally, such as it was. The same reasoning would hold relative to Christian heretics. In the context, where Augustine is treating explicitly of heretics, there does not seem to be in the saint’s mind any special preoccupation about infused faith. His concern is about faith in the materially broad sense, in virtue of which we believe that God exists from the testimony of creation appealed to by St. Paul (cf. Rom. 1:20).

Fifth objection. A formal heretic has the habit of faith. This follows from the firmness and ease with which he clings to the articles he professes.

Reply. Not every habit of believing is one of infused faith. The heretic has an acquired habit—true! But the idea that he has an infused habit is false. He is adhering firmly and with ease to chosen errors, which estranges him more than ever from infused faith. One is free to stand firmly for a mere opinion, if he makes up his mind so to do. But tenacity of this kind does not prevent the opinion from being very elusive or wobbly, if judged according to its formal object. Let the believer begin to consider this peril and his first disposition lapses. He

⁷ St. Augustine, *De unico Baptismo*, chap. 5.

vacillates. Let a non-Catholic, therefore, reflect. His best support is only a human motive. He is attached to his sect or to his individual views, if not through personal exclusivism, at least out of regard for his parents, friends, or arbitrary cultural standards. Such motives are too low to qualify sufficiently for supernatural faith.

Billuart comments that faithful Catholics have no qualms in making acts of faith for similar low-grade motives; but in the rank and file of unpretentious Catholics, their doing so can have hidden within a genuine act of infused faith which they choose and intend to make seriously in secret.

Sixth objection. Heretics say and profess that they accept the Gospel and believe in the articles of faith, for the sole reason that God has revealed them. God's authority seals their authenticity. How can such believers be discredited as lying?

Reply. There is no imputation that they are lying. Some may be honorably deceived. Formal heretics, however, cannot be without fault. These last willfully deny a revealed truth. Such a truth is the establishment of the Church as Christ's mouthpiece to be the proximate and infallible rule of faith. Once this or any other divine mystery is deliberately discarded, there can be no infused faith left. What passes as faith, is believed in by private judgment alone. In vain does the heretic allege that he is not contravening God's authority. His procedure is parallel with that of persons who indulge their passions and sin mortally without self-reproach, on the score that they have no direct intention to offend God.

Seventh objection. Durandus is here implicated. He held that, just as a passing contrary act of intemperance does not destroy the habit of temperance, so also a departure from the faith on a solitary point that is heretical need not destroy the habit of faith, at least on a transitory occasion.

Reply. Cajetan answers: There is no soundness in the comparison. A moral habit of temperance grows out of repeated acts. This is why a passing contrary act does not suffice to destroy the habit. Any other acquired human habit would survive isolated violations for the same reason. But faith is different. It is infused as a habit and can be expelled as a habit from the soul by a single mortal sin against faith; just as the infused habit of charity is thrust out by the commission of any single mortal sin.

Cajetan amplifies his explanation. That a habit of justice or honesty

should be formally compatible with a passing act of dishonesty happens *per accidens*. The good habit that survives has been built up through so many separate acts that one contrary act cannot undo the combined effect of all the others. *Per se*, however, the virtue, as a virtue, is not thus self-sustaining. And when the question of infused habits enters in, there is no supernatural contingency matching the material accumulation of foregoing acts. The result is that this missing accidental preliminary is not there to stand in the way or prevent the complete loss—not to say the ejection—of any infused habit by the commission of any one deliberate act that is formally contrary to it.⁸ With regard to the virtue of temperance: what remains after a mortal sin of intemperance is indeed a force of habit, a resistance made possible by practice, but the growing or surviving material habit is of an imperfect kind. It is as yet underdeveloped. And the delinquent is not fixed in the state of virtue. In the premises, the infused habit of temperance has been entirely withdrawn.⁹

Article 4

Can Faith Be Greater in One Man Than in Another?

Statement of the question. It does not seem so: 1) Whoever has faith believes all things that are of faith. Let him disbelieve a single article and he loses faith in its totality. 2) Faith requires him who has it to inhere in Prime Truth above all else. There is no room left for considerations of more or less in such adhesion. 3) In the supernatural order the position of faith is like the habit of first principles in rational knowledge. But the first principles of reasoning are found equally in all men.

Conclusion. The conclusion we deduce is, nevertheless, affirmative. There can be greater faith in one man than in another, but not by reason of the formal motive or object *quo*. Variations in the degree of faith depend upon the material object and the disposition of the believers relative to their firmness of grasp, promptness, and devotedness in living as well as professing what they believe.

⁸ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 66, a. 1, on the grading of virtues as greater or less.

⁹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, qq. 63, 65, on the generation and cessation of virtues.

Scriptural Proof. (Cf. Mt. 14:31 and the *sed contra*). When walking upon the waves, our Lord said to Peter, whose sudden fear had begun to let him sink: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" Opposite praise was bestowed upon the Chananean mother: "O woman, great is thy faith. Be that done for thee, which thou dost wish" (Mt. 15:28). A striking contrast was emphasized by Jesus in the centurion's favor: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found faith so great in Israel" (Lk. 7:9). The zeal of the apostles impelled them to entreat our Lord thus: "Increase our faith" (Lk. 17:5). Moreover, St. Paul made it clear to the Romans: "God gives to each one his measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). And as if to accentuate how great the measures could be, the same apostle exclaims, when extolling charity for the Corinthians: "Even though I had all faith, so as to move mountains . . ." (1 Cor. 13:2). It is more probable, however, that the mountain-moving faith envisioned here is a grace of the *gratis data* class. At any rate, on the thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Holy Church prays: "Grant us an increase of faith, hope, and charity."

Theological Proof. The theological proof makes allowance for various aspects of our conclusion. Faith can be greater or less in degree, but not as affects the formal motive. The indivisible motive has to be one and the same in all circumstances, namely, Prime Truth revealing.

But the material object of faith occasions varieties among believers. One believer assents explicitly to more truths than another. It is a matter of better instruction, not a case of anybody's doubting willfully a known article of faith, provided the less instructed are disposed to welcome all truths that should be believed, whether, in the present, they know of them or not. Subjectively, believers differ in intelligence and will power. The effect on faith is this: brighter minds seize upon the truths of faith with greater certainty and firmness; stronger wills make for greater readiness and devotedness or loyalty in execution through the animation that faith inspires. These inequalities among the faithful are due to the diversity and inequalities of graces distributed freely through the workings of God's Spirit in souls. To each one is given the special graces proportioned to his needs, function, and mission which enter into the measure of Christ's own giving.¹

In the natural order, the understanding of first principles issues from the resourcefulness of human nature, which is possessed equally by all human beings. Nevertheless, the intellectual capacity of individual per-

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4.

sons is manifested in great varieties of measurement and kind. Even as related to first principles, which rational creatures assent to intuitively on presentation, the truth that is in them is perceived in greater or less degrees by different intellects.

All minds are specifically equal, and yet every individual mind has some differentiating character ascribable to the body with which it is conjoined. The soul of Christ was thus more perfect than the soul of Judas; and the intellect of St. Thomas was superior to that of Durandus. Cajetan observes a parallel between mind and body sight. One mind penetrates first principles and grasps the full extent of their application more successfully than another, because of greater mental acumen. In the corporeal order, with other circumstances remaining the same, a determinate whiteness is perceived better by one person than another because of greater organic perfection in the eye. There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the remark of Aristotle that fineness of physique qualifies cultured people to live more by their brains than the uneducated. But in the Christian setting, divine Providence fashions the embryo or human fetus to subserve the interests of higher grades in soul-life, because matter exists on account of its form, not *e converso*.

Corollary. Faith can fluctuate in the same individual with the lapse of time. It can become greater or less according as the believer is moved by grace to advance in firmness; or, left to himself and losing interest, he may alternate between ardent attachment to the truths of faith when fervent, and virtual indifference toward revealed mysteries in moments of vacillation.

Passive purifications of the spirit always increase faith by intensifying it. In extreme cases they take the form of heroic resistance to vehement temptations against faith itself, on the particular occasions chosen by God to manifest the sublime heights of divine secrets like predestination and infinite justice. The blinding light or luminous darkness encompassing those mysteries with "night," jar the soul into imagining momentarily that they are incredible. The experience has been compared to that of a man thrown into the deep sea without knowing how to swim. The best he can do is to echo the apostles' cry: "Lord increase our faith" (Lk. 17:5). His mustard seed is no mountain-mover, but this is what his desolation induces him to do. He persists in believing heroically, by clinging with a faith that is the purest, to the formal motive that rises infinitely above all human motivations. He does not look back, nor away, nor down on the faith of parents or friends.

His mind penetrates the darkness certified by faith's formulas. He is believing "hidden secrets," divine mysteries, not merely the concepts backing up fixed formulas, but truths otherwise buried in the very life of God.

What a triumph over temptation! Such a believer has taken to flight, over and away from human thinking and diabolical snares. The refuge he finds is in immutable Prime Truth believed in solely on its own account. A heroic act of faith such as this can create a corresponding disposition to believe ten times more energetically than before. It is the testimony of St. John of the Cross,² that very many souls among those in the progressive stage, pass through spiritual purifications such as those described, though in moderated degrees. Their endurance is tested only for hours (although in some rare cases for whole days), so that they pass alternately between purifications and consolations, as from state to state. The author of the *Imitation of Christ* refers quite often to the same successions in mystic phenomena. But in the progressive state, so named, the dark night of the spirit lies always beyond the horizon. In this sense, St. John of the Cross interprets verse seven of Psalm 147: "He sends his crystal-like morsels" [that is, ice in the form of hailstones], by saying: "God supplies the crystal of contemplation in small pellets", that it may be more easily assimilated as food.

We have dwelt upon these spiritual questions more at length in other places under the headings "Love of God," "Cross of Jesus";³ passive purification of the senses, of the spirit, and of faith, hope, and charity.⁴

Queries answered by Bañez and Sylvius

First query. Can unformed or lifeless faith, considered as a specific intellectual habit, be extensively and intensively greater than faith animated by charity?

Reply. Yes. It is true that the slightest amount of living faith is, simply speaking, greater than the greatest faith one can have in the state of mortal sin. None but faith that is alive ranks as absolute virtue. None but living faith attains to the last end so as to produce meritorious acts.

² Cf. St. John of the Cross, *The Obscure Night*, II, chap. 1.

³ Cf. *L'Amour de Dieu et la Croix de Jésus* (Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1929). Also, Italian translation.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, II, pp. 458-502, 549-657.

Nevertheless, when attention is focused exclusively on the intellectual habit of believing, that intellectual habit can be more extended and more intense in its adhesiveness in a person guilty of mortal sin, than it is in a less gifted neighbor, who has less understanding but is free from sin. Extensively, a sinner can know much more about the faith than an innocent man. He might perchance be a fallen theologian who is a genius through his familiarity with all doctrines that have been defined by the Church. Intensively, if a just man whose faith is strong commits a mortal sin, his faith which becomes immediately formless, retains its previous degree of personal strength and may still be graded as stronger than that of a neighbor who, though in the state of grace, is perhaps habitually weak in faith. But this paradoxical predicament is caused by the guilt of sin and is *per accidens*.

Second query. Does lifeless or unformed faith sometimes grow in strength?

Reply. Our two guides, Bañez and Sylvius, answer affirmatively. For the same reason that faith can be infused without charity—as when a believer in the Gospel is baptized without any intention to restore ill-gotten goods to their rightful owner—so also, faith can be increased without charity. The increase, however, is devoid of personal merit. From behind the veil, God's Holy Spirit can be enkindling piety in a sinner interiorly; in all likelihood, this is what is going on when a taste for divine truth is manifestly developing and showing, even before charity is infused or restored, because of some sinful obstacle which is not yet duly repented of.

Third query. Can faith suffer a diminution?

Reply. If the inquiry has to do with the elimination or cancellation of any article of revealed truth, no. It has been shown clearly enough above that the deliberate disbelief of a single article of faith makes it impossible to believe other revealed articles with faith that is supernatural or infused. It is a situation in which true faith has been lost as a unit. But granting that faith is genuine because of its actual assent to all articles, there can be a diminution in the degree of their upholding. A caution is necessary, however. A distinction is to be made between direct and indirect diminution.

Sylvius answers that the intensity of faith may be diminished indirectly only, not directly. What does he mean? The gradual or direct diminution of intensity in adhering to a habit has no place when the

said habit is an infused one. The habit is either possessed or not possessed as a whole. It is possessed if infused; it is not possessed at all if not infused. Faith, as a "gift of God," is therefore either infused and possessed, or not infused and not possessed. There is no third or intermediate possibility such as gradual diminution would introduce. But just as for an acquired habit not infused, which is built up by a repetition of acts, diminution is possible by a cessation or interruption of the acts or, as we have shown in morals, by the commission of a passing sin contrary to the habit. Omission of necessary practice or the commission of an exceptional contrary act can diminish any acquired habit. They amount to impediments that need to be warded off. Thus, with regard as to the nurturing of faith by positive exercise and cultivation, faith can diminish in its intensity in face of an admixture or multiplication of impediments. This is what Sylvius means by saying that diminution is possible indirectly. The imprudent reading of books written by heretics does such damage. The spirit of the authors undermines the spirit of the readers gradually, preliminary to sudden and complete collapse. In a similar way, charity, which is not forfeited by venial sin, can "grow cold." With the loss of fervor the virtue may be described like faith, as diminishing extrinsically—others can see it. The process, however, is indirect. When faith stops growing it is ready to die, even though death, when it comes, is over in an instant.⁵

QUESTION SIX

The Efficient Cause of Faith

Introduction

Of the four kinds of causes, three have already been considered in the domain of faith, namely, the formal, final, and material causes. All three affect the subject or person believing. At present the efficient cause is our concern. It has a double aspect, thereby giving rise to two articles: 1) Does man receive faith directly from God by infusion? 2) Is lifeless or informed faith a gift of God?

⁵ The analysis of the view of Sylvius is here incorporated from a footnote.

Article 1

Is Faith Infused Into Man by God?

That faith is a "gift of God" was admitted at the beginning of this treatise on the authority of Holy Scripture (cf. Eph. 2:9). What we here add is the theological proof fashioned from the nature of its formal object.

Statement of the question. A negation of faith's being a divine gift would have no more solid reasons than these: 1) St. Augustine affirms that "faith is engendered through knowledge." This sounds like saying it is an acquisition by creatures. 2) Isaias is a leader in holding that faith originates in hearing (which is a human experience). 3) To appeal to Augustine again, it is the will to believe that constitutes faith. (Christian science has nothing new to boast of, if it only kept wholly in such dignified company.)

Conclusion. We make our own the only complete and well-founded conclusion admissible: Faith has to come from God exteriorly and interiorly. Exteriorly, it reaches to the whole body of revealed mysteries. Interiorly, it is a spiritual virtue, a habit governing one's personal assent. For an individual believer to embrace through his assent all truths authentically revealed, actual supernatural help is a necessity. Both the intellect and will must be bent or turned upwards by power that no creature can produce.¹ Teachers there have been who have wondered whether it is possible for men to grasp any fiber of truth without grace.² We are engaged here with divine truths only. Formulated as it is, our conclusion is contrary to the erroneous doctrines of Pelagius, the Semi-Pelagians, and a scattering of other theologians.

1. Pelagius, when his first heretical plunges were new, claimed that the assent of faith was sufficient, even though it did not extend beyond external revelation. But the mere profession of faith is a superficial thing without the virtue.

2. The Semi-Pelagians held that at least the pious inclination of the will, with which faith begins, is from oneself.

3. Durandus, Scotus, and the nominalists afterwards maintained that there is no available proof to favor the necessity of infused faith, not-

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 1.

² Cf. Salmanticenses and Billuart, *De Gratia*.

withstanding the authority of Church councils that endorse it. On the other hand, it is possible for fallen man to yield assent to the Gospel as divine revelation, from his own inherent resourcefulness. Therefore, infused faith is not an absolute necessity for intellectual assent as such. It is a requirement, however, for the strength of adhesion and the ease of its performance that make faith sufficient for salvation. It is a question of measure or manner—a matter of more or less—that raises faith to be supernatural, not in order, but in degree. This was the tangent of Molina and also of Billot. They explained: When faith is denominated supernatural in its substance, the meaning is, it is produced by God alone as its efficient principle and it proceeds from sanctifying grace.

Faith of this sort cannot be substantially supernatural, as long as its formal object and specification are from creatures and not from God. The supporters of the contrary position wandered disastrously into contending that grace indeed is necessary for salvation, in the operations of believing, without being needed for the establishment of God's authority in revealing.

Thomists keep to the sure road. For them, infused faith is an absolute necessity for inhering in Prime Truth, for identifying oneself with the revelation of God himself as the author of grace—and doing so, in the most strictly formal sense. In that perspective, faith is supernatural in its substance. Its substance is that of a habit specified by a twofold object *quo* and *quod*, which makes faith essentially sufficient for salvation as it needs to be. This "sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5), and because it is, it is wrapped up intrinsically as the motive of believing.

Scriptural Proof. Holy Scripture is swarming with testimonies whose vigor is clarified by the Thomistic analysis.

"By grace you are saved through faith, and not of yourselves"; that "no man may glory"; "It is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8-9). "Behold how thou hast loved truth. The uncertain and hidden secrets of thy wisdom, thou hast made manifest to me" (Ps. 50:8); "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones" (Mt. 11:25); "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood has not revealed to thee [that I am the Christ] but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17); "Light came into the world and men loved darkness rather than the light" (Jn. 3:19); "It is written in the prophets: 'They shall all be taught of God.' Every one who has heard and learned of the Father,

comes to me. . . . He who believes in me has everlasting life" (Jn. 6:45,47), as it were, in seedling form; "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (Acts 13:48); "The Lord opened the heart [of Lydia] to attend to those things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14).

Christ's address to St. Paul in the moment of his conversion was specific. The Apostle's mission was, "to open the eyes [of nonbelievers] and convert them from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18). The faith he was to spread had first been infused into himself; but it was a faith that would cleave the masses. "The sensual [animal] man perceives not these things that are of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness for him. He cannot understand what is spiritually examined. The spiritual man judges all things. . . . We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:14-16); "I have planted, Apollo watered. God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. . . . We are God's coadjutors. You are God's husbandry. You are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:6,7,9); "No man can say 'Lord Jesus,' but in the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3).

St. Paul taught clearly, firmly, and with the impact of historic illustration, that it is not enough to yield acceptance to the letter of the Gospel, any more than to cling to the law of Moses superficially. The senses of the ancient Hebrews had been made dull. "Even unto this day . . . the veil is upon their heart. But when they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. The Lord is a Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But all we, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:14-18). The letter of divine teaching remains always the same; but in the interior soul-life there is an increasing grace that progressively causes improved transformation. In the absence of motivation from grace of this kind, the Gospel remains a closed book utterly sealed. Accordingly, if the "Gospel as we preach it, is hidden," the misfortune is that of those who are lost. In them the [demon who is] god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, lest the Light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should shine on them. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:3-6). The commentary of St. Thomas on this passage ought to be read.

St. Paul's humble warning sweeps through great depths and heights: "We have this treasure in clay vessels, that its excellence may show, as of the power of God, and not our own" (Eph. 1:17). The Ephesians are certified of this, the inspiring motive of St. Paul's apostleship: "I cease not to pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of your heart being enlightened, you may know the hope of this calling and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:15-18); "Heretofore, you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light whose fruit is in all goodness and justice and truth" (Eph. 5:8-9); "Arise, thou that sleepest and Christ shall enlighten thee" (Eph. 5:14).

Along similar lines the Colossians were informed: "We cease not to pray for you and beg that you be filled with the knowledge of (God's) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding—growing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-11). "Our gospel to you," Thessalonians, "has not been in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much fullness" (1 Thes. 1:5). A similar mode of address was directed to the Philippians (cf. Phil. 1:3-6).

Several of the above passages refer to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but infused faith, enlivened by charity, is itself connected with the gifts. It ranks higher than the gifts and is their regulator, their rule. A greater altitude is reached in passages which bring out the absolute supernaturalness of the primary object of faith which is the intimate life of God. The Corinthians were favored with a declaration truly sublime: "We speak wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world. . . . We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a mystery which is hidden . . . which none of the princes of this world knew. . . . Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into man's heart, what things God has prepared for those who love him. But to us God has revealed them, by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:6-10).

In the background of such faith is the echo of Christ's own words: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to little ones. . . . Nobody knows the Son but the Father. Neither does anybody know the Father but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him" (Mt. 11:25-27).

The reading of St. Thomas' commentary on an opposite text is

recommended (Jn. 5:36-37); "The works which the Father has given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father has sent me. And the Father himself who has sent me, has given testimony of me but you have not heard his voice at any time" (Jn. 5:36-37).³

Proof from tradition. Proof from the Councils of the Church, beginning with the case of the Pelagians: the Council of Milève, 416 A.D. (cf. Denz. 104). This council was approved by Pope Innocent I. Two years later, 418, the condemnation of Pelagianism was continued in the Council of Carthage, which was approved by Pope Zosimus: "Whoever shall say . . . that it is not through the same grace of Christ that we are given to know what to do, and also that we should love and be able to do it, *anathema sit*." From this censure it follows that interior grace is needed both to believe and to love God.

The Second Council of Orange, 529 A.D. (cf. Denz. 178 ff.), confirmed by Pope Boniface II, set itself against the Semi-Pelagians. It defined in canons 5, 6, 7, and 25, that "the beginning of faith, which takes shape in a pious affection or inclination to believe, is a gift of grace. Furthermore, it is impossible to believe as one must, for salvation, without the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost."

The Council of Trent denounces the contrary position: "If anybody says that, without receiving beforehand the inspiration and help which comes from the Holy Ghost, a man believes, hopes, loves, or is able to repent in the way necessary for the grace of sanctification, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 813).

The First Vatican Council, speaking in the same manner and linking itself expressly with the Council of Orange, declared: "No one can give consent to the preaching of the Gospel in the manner required for salvation, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost" (Denz. 1791).

The Latin clause, *Sicut oportet ad salutem*, which we have rendered, "In the manner necessary for salvation," has occasioned certain interpretations among Catholic authors which the doctrine above expounded impels us to present, even though consistency will force us to repudiate them as erroneous.

Scotus said that theological faith is not entitatively supernatural. It is supernatural in mode only. Lychetus, the defender and commentator of Scotus, accentuates: "It was not always *de fide*, or obligatory to be-

³ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 465, 473, the text from St. Augustine.

lieve, that acts of faith, hope, and charity were supernatural in their substance."⁴ From the Council of Vienne up until the Council of Trent (A.D. 1312-1563) it passed as a more probable position that there might be habits that are *per se* infused. After the Council of Trent the attitude gained greater certainty. It seems highly probable that faith binds us to hold to the reality of certain physical aids *per se infused* to bring about the performance of acts [expressive of faith, hope, and charity].

Cajetan stood against Scotus by maintaining the falseness of his opinion and claiming that, from the times of the Council of Vienne, no lawful claim could be made to sustain it.⁵

After the Council of Trent several theologians appear teaching that habitual grace and the theological virtues are indeed supernatural in substance; but they add a misleading modification. Take the Molinists, as they trailed after Scotus and the nominalists. They spoiled the soundness of their profession by explaining that the substantial supernaturalness of faith arose from the inadequacy of all created causes of themselves to produce it. It had to come—it could only come—from God alone. It had its immediate origin with and in habitual grace, whence it radiated normally.

There was, therefore, no supernatural motivation, formally affecting and specifying the substance of faith, for the simple reason that faith, humanly acquired, like the faith which demons possess, can attain to the object of faith without it. True, the attainment is marked with a disorder that disqualifies for salvation; but the disorder itself does not interfere with the substantial supernaturalness of the faith, abstracting from its inevitable frustration.

In replying to Molinistic errors and leanings it is best to delve first into the sound doctrine of Aquinas, expounded in the *Summa theologia* (IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 1). [The doctrine is divisible into two pithy truths. The acceptance of articles of faith postulates necessarily an external divine revelation of their content. It also requires an interior grace; for the acceptance is not an empty profession but an intellectual assent to the mysteries revealed.]

First requirement: The exterior divine revelation of what is proposed for belief. Truths that belong *per se* to the realm of faith are supernatural mysteries. They extend far beyond the reach of human reason

⁴ Cf. Scotus, in *I Sent.*, Prol., q. 1; *I Sent.*, d. 17, q. 3, n. 33; *III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, nn. 4-14; d. 25, n. 2. Lychetus, in *III Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, n. 72.

⁵ Cf. Cajetan's commentary on the *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 5; Gonet, *Clypeus theol. Thom.*, *De Gratia*, d. II, a. 3; *De Revelatione*, I, p. 216.

and the intellects of angels, created or creatable. The First Vatican Council came out strongly for this necessity in countering the semi-rationalists, who contended that even the mysteries of faith can be demonstrated once they are revealed (cf. Denz. 1795). Aquinas observes that, for certain human instruments, like the prophets, the divine revelation is accorded immediately. It is addressed to them personally in prophetic light. To others the revelation is delivered indirectly or mediately. These learn from the prophets; and in Christian times, by the teaching of the Church.

It is to be pondered seriously that the public teaching of divine revelation by the Church is couched in solemn terms. The penalty of anathematization, the promulgation of a truth "in the name of God revealing," and not by the authority of history, are pronouncements sealed with the infallibility which Christ bestowed upon his Church as the duly established exponent of revelation.⁶

The First Vatican Council merits to be heard because of its authentic leadership in this divine direction (cf. Denz. 1785, 1813, 2078). Its solemn definition of the origin of Christian doctrine, the supernatural character and proving power of miracles, the force of the notes of the Church in certifying her divine mission, the Church's infallibility—these constituents tower far higher than any declaration that would be possible for organized conventions of Catholic historians or apologists on the same subjects. The best that could be expected from congresses of this sort would be reducible to a compilation of findings amassed from historical sources and engendering nothing better than moral certitude. But let the Church with the living voice tell solemnly of the divine origin of Christianity; let her weigh the demonstrative impact of genuine miracles; let her acquaint you with her own infallibility, as resolving itself back into Prime Truth revealing objectively, and without being deceived or deceiving. Thereupon, the faith that should develop proportionately is not of the kind whose security cannot exceed what human testimony suffices to build up—it has to be an infused faith based on testimony that needs to be and is divine.

Second Requirement: Aquinas proves the necessity of an interior grace in order to believe or assent to mysteries that have been revealed.

He argues effectively against the sufficiency of miracles, apologetical preaching, and a naturally good will on the part of listeners, to take the place of the internal grace. Of those who witness exactly the same mir-

⁶ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, p. 499.

acle and those who hear the same external preachment, certain ones believe, others do not.

As for the natural good will of the witnesses who see the miracle or hear the sermon, both Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians were in error. Both held for its sufficiency. The beginning of faith, which consists in a pious disposition to believe, was not, as they claimed, the fruit of grace. It springs forth from ourselves as its field of origin. It is a product of nature's own resourcefulness. It is the blossoming of personal choice. Such an error is heresy.

Theological Proof. St. Thomas rounds out the theological teaching opposing Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism in a way that may be presented in syllogistic form.

Man cannot be lifted above his natural level, save by the operation of a supernatural principle. But when man assents to supernatural mysteries, he is on an eminence already beyond the reach he would have on his natural plane. Therefore, what has happened within him is this: he has been supernaturally elevated by motion from an interior principle, and that principle is God. This is a clear way of stating that the virtue of faith must be infused, and an actual grace received before the soul utters its orthodox "Credo"—"I believe."

Aquinas is far from insisting, as do the Molinists, on the gadfly of the Council of Orange: Believe "as it behooves for salvation." He knew too well that supernatural salvation is not possible without supernatural grace. But faith that is not faith destroys grace. It is a counterfeit. To be real objective faith, the habit and virtue assent to supernatural mysteries only because it is an infused brand. It motivates through its own formal principle, which is Prime Truth directly revealing. The act or habit of so believing has only one basis, namely, the authority of God revealing, precisely as the author of grace. There is no longer any need of an analytical search to make sure of a faith that must be compounded in some obscure way in order to guarantee salvation, at least when all other things are properly adjusted.

The major of the Angelic Doctor is evident.

The minor premise is proved from the essentially supernatural character of the formal object of faith, *quod* and *quo*. This has to do with all revealed action or communication which is essentially supernatural and has to match them, through the specification it derives from them. It includes besides, the right ordering of all agencies, as dictated by the order of the supernatural ends.

God, as the author of nature, can do the miraculous in nature. He can reveal natural truths conducive to and belonging to the natural virtue of religion. But the moment supernatural secrets enter in, the Creator is no longer operating as the author of nature, but more intimately as author of grace and salvation. This is Christian faith. Natural religion is sterile philosophy if dechristianized.⁷

Solution of Objections

Since the Council of Trent a respectable number of theologians hold that faith is *per se* infused, to distinguish it from whatever—like geometry for instance—could be infused as it were, *per accidens*. But others, intent upon salvaging somewhat the doctrine of Scotus and the nominalists, explain faith as supernatural, touching its substance; but not by reason of a formal object that is inaccessible without grace. For them, its substantial supernaturalness arises from the fact that God alone can produce it, and he actually does so, by making it a property of habitual grace. The formal object of faith, in this perspective, may be attained to without grace. The historical study of the Gospel with its reinforcement from miracles will lead thereto.

Thomists are unanimously against the latter view. It is their principle that habits and acts are apportioned their species by their formal object. For this reason, no habit can be *per se* infused and supernatural in its substance without being specified by a formal object that is essentially supernatural and inaccessible, but by grace. To discard this principle—which is the axis of this book, namely, that potencies, habits, and acts have their specification from their formal object—is to undermine the whole body of proofs bolstering up the spirituality of the soul. Thereafter no infused virtue would be of any use.⁸

First objection. Supernatural mysteries are indeed beyond the reach of humans, until they are revealed exteriorly. But once there has been a public revelation, they are accessible without the need of interior grace. This explains why, if not how, demons grasp them.

Reply. Thomists appeal to the clear minded response of their Master. Believing is accredited to demons and to the faithful equivocally.⁹ Demons and the sensual or animal man can penetrate no deeper than

⁷ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In De Trinitate Boëtii*, q. 3, a. 1 ad 4; *De Revelatione*, I, p. 444.

⁸ Cf. Cajetan, commenting on this present article; John of St. Thomas, *De Fide*, d. 5, a. 2, n. 2.

⁹ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 4.

the letter of the Gospel. They have only an acquired faith. The faithful, worthily so-called, are different. They penetrate the surface and win acquaintanceship in a formal manner with supernatural mysteries as such, because, spiritually and supernaturally, they get into direct contact with their unique object which is essentially supernatural.

Second objection. God alone, as he is in himself, is the one supernatural substantial entity, not infused faith.

Reply. God alone is the solitary supernatural substantial entity in the sense of an objective substance—granted. God is the only essentially supernatural thing—not so. Besides God there are in existence essentially supernatural accidents. It is to them we are applying the descriptive terms “essentially supernatural as to substance.” If the formal object of faith were attainable without grace, the same could be predicated of hope and charity. Charity, for wayfarers in this valley of tears, would not then be supernatural on the part of its object. Only in heaven would that come to pass. It is a certainty, however, that for God’s elect, infused charity is specifically one and the same, both in this exile, the world, and throughout eternity, at home in heaven.

Third objection. Opponents insist that there is such a possibility as a miracle in substance, like the glorification of a human body or prophecy, without an object that is essentially supernatural. A prophecy need not concern anything beyond future contingencies of the natural order; for example, the termination of a war.

Reply. A caution is in order. Confusion must be avoided between these two distinct things: a miracle in substance and something supernatural in substance. The miracle is traceable back to a prior efficient cause, not itself; the supernatural would be due to its own inherent formal cause.¹⁰ The following tabulation will facilitate grasping this perspective:

Billot’s objection. St. Thomas indicates that habits are distinguished specifically in three ways: (1) according to the active principles determining their dispositions; (2) according to their nature; (3) according to the specific distinctions of their objects.¹¹ Why, after this, should there be any need of a specific distinction derived from a single object?

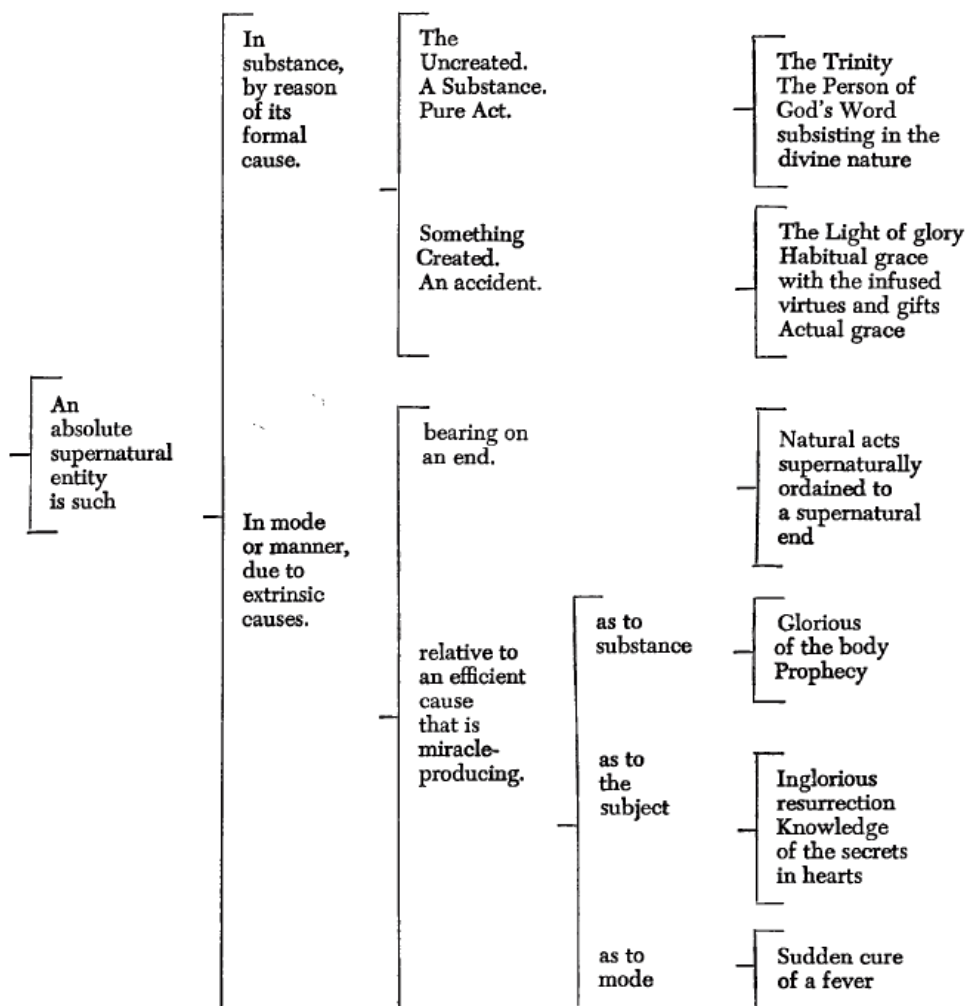
Reply. As we have elsewhere explained,¹² these three modes which have reference to the specification of operative habits, are indeed to be distinguished but not separated. In themselves they are objectively con-

¹⁰ Cf. *De Revelatione*, I, pp. 193–95.

¹¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2.

¹² Cf. *De Gratia* (1947), pp. 375–87.

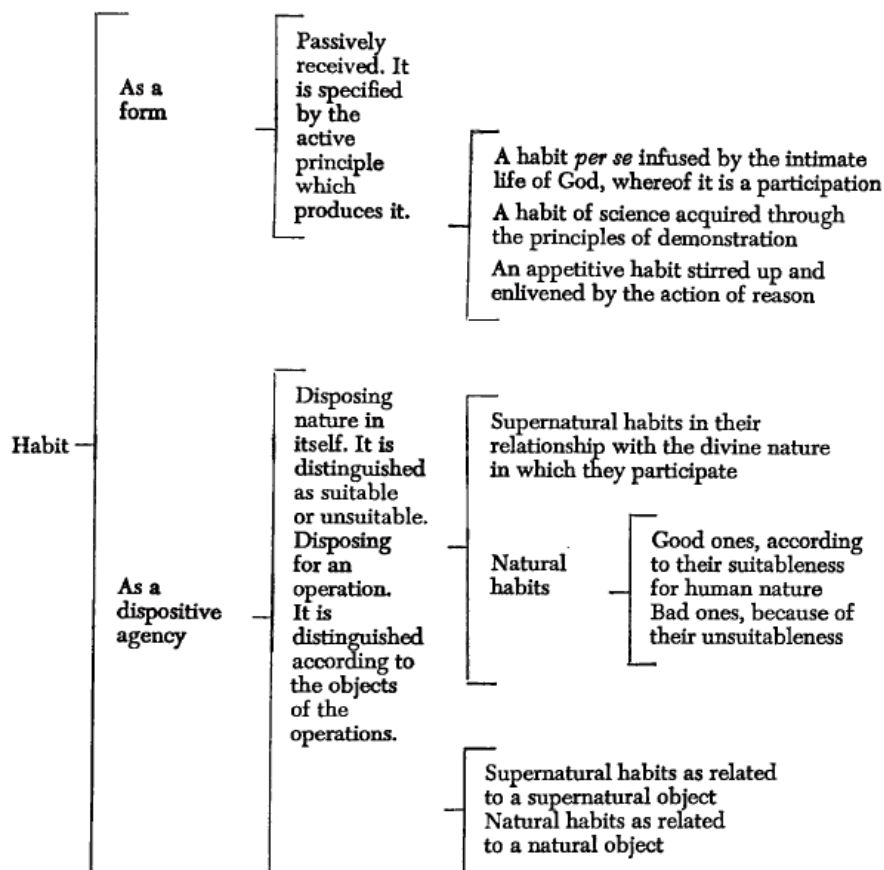
DIVERSE SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES



nected, as the context of Aquinas gives us to understand. There is no human habit that measures up to grace, *per se*, no human habit that is infused *per se*, unless it receives its own particular specification from some supernatural object independently. The clear-minded perception of St. Thomas can be seen from these two tables.

These modes of specification are connected. To illustrate: an operative natural habit is not suitable to human nature unless it has a proportionately suitable object. Nor is an essentially supernatural habit aligned with grace—it is not *per se* infused by God—if it is without an

SPECIFICATIONS AND MODES OF HABITS



essentially supernatural object. It is the common bent of St. Thomas to reduce specification to the cause or object that specifies—the final cause—and for this reason: Every agent operates for a particular end. Specification begins here. It is here in its primary stage. So much being granted, all else is bound to follow if the specification is supernatural. The habit is necessarily conformable to grace and must *per se* be infused. All these items hang together. To bespeak one is to bespeak all. They are convertible.

A doubt has been raised as to whether one or other of the faithful might have experimental certitude that is believed in with an infused habit of faith, and not through acquired faith, such as the demons and formal heretics abide by.

Cajetan volunteers an important line of reasoning. We know by ex-

perience that we are actually believing in mysteries of faith that are supernatural. "It does not follow from that fact, however, that we possess any experimental knowledge that the habit of faith has been infused [into us]. It is reasonable, nevertheless, that we should believe that it has been infused, just as it is reasonable to hold that we are sorry for sin committed. . . ." This is what St. Thomas means to convey in his response to the inquiry whether one can know that he is in the state of grace.¹³

The characteristic of faith is this. A believer is certain about the things in which he has faith. His certainty is an intellectual perfection, for the things in which he believes are lodged in his mind. Therefore, whoever possesses a fund of science, knowledge, or faith is certain about it from the scrutiny of his own interior. It is different with endowments that develop the appetitive energies in man's make-up. Grace, charity, and corresponding accompaniments are of this sort.

To keep to the matter of faith, a believer is supernaturally certain about the truth of things revealed. To them he firmly assents. In so doing, the act he performs makes him certain that he truly believes. His conscience is formed. By the exercise of his faith through acts that are supernatural, he is proving the stanchness of his infused "Credo." But the conviction so safely rooted in him is not and cannot be the unaided achievement of his own reflecting conscience. It is not possible, through personal reflection in conscience, to gain infallible certitude that one is in possession of infused faith. The precise act of believing, sealed within itself, in virtue of its infusion, is not within the compass controlled by conscientious reflection on one's deed. Nothing that is formally supernatural—that is, constituted in the supernatural order through its own form, and yet thoroughly distinct from a corresponding act in the order of nature—is within the range of one's personal reflective conscience. Without a special revelation, therefore, which is never to be assumed, I have no personal right to claim that, my faith, in me, has been infused. To cite John of St. Thomas: "Faith itself is not classified as a special object to be believed in, as a possession, resulting from deliberate reflection; and that is why it does not appear among the articles proposed for our belief."¹⁴

Cajetan, with greater perspicacity, tops the doctrine of John of St.

¹³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 5.

¹⁴ John of St. Thomas, *De Fide*, d. 5, a. 2, n. 4.

Thomas very significantly. The conviction Catholics have of their possessing true faith soars above rational bounds, because, after baptism they distinguish adroitly and derive encouragement from the discernment that none of their mortal sins are against faith. Such insight betokens greater certitude about the existence of infused faith in their intellects than they have about the presence of infused charity in their wills. Well do they understand that charity [with sanctifying grace] may be lost by any mortal sin, even by a sin they have voluntarily committed indirectly, by consenting to its cause. St. Paul had this quirk of spirituality in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians: "I am not interiorly conscious of any [offense], but I am not thereby justified" (1 Cor. 4:4). Over and above this undulatory thinking, we Catholics are animated and strengthened by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Supplemental items have a proportionate bearing on this providence. Most signal was our Lord's protestation to St. Peter when the fisherman had declared: "Thou art Christ, Son of the Living God." "Blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-Jona. It is not flesh and blood that has revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17). In theological terms, the certitude we have of possessing the faith within us derives confirmation from the gifts of understanding and wisdom.

Accordingly, John of St. Thomas descends from the abstract to the psychological by stating: "Authentic knowledge is gained from signs and conjectures, and also from a familiar form of interior experience, that our act (of believing) is supernatural. In this characteristic vein we hold that our 'act of faith' is infallible. This individual conviction does not proceed immediately from faith itself; but it is a proper inset in the grand panorama referred to in the universal assertion: The Faith is infallible."

Article 2

Is Lifeless Faith a Gift of God?

Statement of the question. Since dead or lifeless faith subsists conjointly in a soul guilty of mortal sin, a negation would seem to be invited: (1) by an assertion in Deuteronomy, that "the works of God are perfect" (Dt. 32:4); (2) because the deformity of sin is not from God—neither is unformed or lifeless faith, which is a deformity; (3) and,

moreover, whomever God heals is perfectly healed. There is no room for the infusion of faith without charity.

Conclusion. The conclusion of Aquinas is forthright: Lifeless faith is a "gift of God."

Proof from Tradition. A gloss borrowed from St. Augustine runs: "Faith which is without charity is a gift of God" (Denz. 178, 838). Twice over the Church condemned contradictory propositions ascribed to the Jansenists and Quesnel (cf. Denz. 1302, 1401-1407). The First Vatican Council defined as follows against Hermes: "If anybody says that God's grace is necessary only for a living faith which works through charity, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 1791); "Faith in its very self, even though it does not work through charity, is a gift of God; and an act of faith is a work pertaining to salvation" (Denz. 1814).

Theological Proof. The supernatural lifelessness of faith in the intellect does not affect its specific nature. It bespeaks only the absence of a virtue—charity, whose location is the will. But absolutely speaking, God is the cause of faith, as previously stated. Therefore, in the matter of unformed or lifeless faith God is its cause as faith, without being the cause of its deformity or formlessness. The formal motive of lifeless faith, the intrinsic factor inducing its assent, continues. The content of the foregoing article so provides.

Faith is like a diaphanous body [or like a crystal that cannot serve its specific purpose in the dark]. Occasionally, the transparent medium is damaged, in which case it resembles lifeless faith. [Neither the author of faith, nor the maker of the crystal, is responsible for the similarities in the damage.] Darkness results from the damage without impairing the species either of the damaged faith or the damaged medium of physical light.

It is just the opposite of sin as sin. God cannot be the cause of sin, because deformity enters into the very species of sin. It is the sinfulness of the moral act. Of course, false or heretical faith is sin. It cannot proceed from God. True faith, even though lifeless, is not a specifically distinct sin, but a virtue and a gift of God, no matter how imperfect.

A doubt. Granting that faith exists as a virtue without charity, a doubt arises as to whether one may from the first receive faith without charity, since the infusion of faith is a direct act of God.

Reply. The reply of St. Thomas is affirmative. Controversies have followed. Cajetan and Bañez saw fit to defend Aquinas against certain opponents. Vitoria and Soto have done the same against a younger

generation, dividing even the Thomists.¹ Three conclusions follow:

Conclusion I: Faith in act and habit, is infused at baptism into every man who is disposed to accept it, even though there be no accompanying infusion of grace.

The base of this doctrine lies in the nature of the disposition which leads a candidate to receive baptism. He is piously attracted toward all that God reveals through his Church; and he yields intellectual assent to all verities connected therewith, at least in a general way. This attitude toward faith can exist without contrition for a particular mortal sin.

A volume written by St. Augustine, *On Faith and Works*, is permeated, beyond all doubt, with the definite teaching that candidates "baptized in the state of mortal sin have true faith." They belong to the ranks of the faithful. They are genuine Christians. That would not be so if they received nothing but the baptismal character. Heretics may have the indelible character; yet their faith is not true and they are Christians only equivocally.

Conclusion II: It is possible for a catechumen to have faith without charity. Such a one, as St. Augustine admitted, might be living in concubinage.² Nevertheless, he can invoke God and be interiorly disposed for faith, though not for charity. His assent to all truths revealed is unreserved. He welcomes them when proposed by the Church. He is neither pagan, nor heretic, nor Jew. He is one of the faithful, devoid of charity.³

Conclusion III: Cajetan couches the doctrine analytically.⁴ Relative to the divine act of God infusing, faith, hope, and charity are infused simultaneously with grace; but owing to the bad spot affecting a particular recipient, it can turn out *per accidens* that the simultaneity is interfered with. The presence of voluntary malice in a subject could leave one prepared for faith and hope, without sanctifying grace and charity.

A special question could be introduced here, as to whether infused faith can be lost without sin. Three degrees of gravity seem possible. We proceed interrogatively: Can faith be lost without a material sin being committed thereby? Without a formal sin? Without a mortal sin

¹ Cf. related historical and controversial data introduced previously above, q. 4, a. 4.

² Cf. St. Augustine, *De Fide et Operibus*, chaps. 21-23.

³ Bañez approves; also Suárez, *De Gratia*, VIII, chap. 23.

⁴ Cf. Cajetan's commentary in the *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. 4.

committed against faith? In due course we shall have to treat of infidelity, investigating whether infidelity is a sin and whether it is lodged in the intellect or in the will. The queries just proposed may be deferred for treatment until the larger subject of infidelity is reached. This will be in Question Ten, Articles 1 and 2, of this present work. It is enough here to state that nearly all theologians agree in answering negatively.⁵

QUESTION SEVEN

The Effects of Faith

Introduction

We have completed the treatment of faith according to its four causes. It is now time to weigh the effects toward which faith in action tends. They are God-fearingness and hardness of heart, says St. Thomas, depending on whether one's active faith is alive or dead.

These two effects are here brought to the fore because justification, of which faith is the root, has its beginning in the fear of the Lord and its culmination in perfect purity of heart. On this background it grows clear that faith, which is the root of all virtues, functions as an all pervading substantial factor of organic virtue as a unit, in all its justifying processes. Virtue is a spiritual edifice that is here exemplified by bringing out its beginning and its summit. Jesus was appraising it as a whole, in the same way, when he said: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart" (Mt. 11:29). Humility is a fundamental virtue. Meekness is the blossoming of charity. Humility excavates. Meekness is the gabled roof.

Article 1

Is Fear an Effect of Faith?

Statement of the question. Fear does not seem to be an effect of faith because: 1) the Book of Sirach commands: "You who fear the Lord,

⁵ Cf. Vacant, *Étude sur le Concile du Vatican*, I, pp. 576, 598; II, pp. 173-75.

believe him" (Sir. 2:8). These words show that fear precedes faith. 2) Faith is the cause of hope, which is the opposite of fear. 3) The object of faith is a good to be hoped for, rather than an evil to be feared.

First conclusion. Faith is the cause of fear, both servile and filial.

Theological Proof. Faith leads one to estimate two evils, namely, (1) the penalty God will inflict on the wicked and (2) the guilt or malice of sin. But servile fear grips those doomed to be punished by God; whereas filial fear dreads to be separated from God through sin. In either case faith is operating. It causes both forms of fear, servile and filial.

Second Conclusion. Servile fear is the effect of unformed faith. Filial fear is the effect of living faith. Only he who has charity and is thereby in union with God is capable of filial fear, the fear of being or getting separated from God through mortal sin. Fear of this nature is reverent. It abhors a comparison of self with God Most High. Its homage is profound. It is because reverential fear lasts over into eternity that it is celebrated in the preface of Holy Mass as shared by the angels. It makes the "powers tremble," notwithstanding their blessedness and excellence in beatific vision. But the trembling of celestial choirs is quite opposite to the fear which is the lot of reprobate demons. They are the poles in the world of spirits, these two extreme conditions. What a terrible antithesis! Demons believe and dread—they tremble in their darkness. The angelic powers tremble too, but in great glory and because of what their glory shows them.

Answers to difficulties. 1. There can be an anticipation of fear before faith is complete. Certain articles of faith—take the excellence of divinity, for instance—are sufficient to awaken a reverential fear which excites in the subject a further effect by inducing him to submit his intelligence without reserve to belief in God's promises in their entirety. As Bañez points out in his treatment of the preceding article, God sometimes disposes a soul for faith without actually infusing the virtue. The grace operates in this manner: the favored one is granted a spiritual insight or appreciative judgment of the meaning of divine excellence, God's almightiness, justice, loving-kindness; then, forth from these intuitions as they increase one by one, he draws and bestows a final full-sweeping and generous acceptance of all teachings proposed by Holy Church.

2. Faith causes hope and fear united. It excites hope by manifesting rewards that may be striven for. It awakens fear by manifesting the

possible accompaniment of a material object that is evil, namely, a penalty or guilt, or both.

But how does faith become the cause of fear, efficiently or by proposing the object that frightens?

The answer is: By proposing the object feared and not efficiently. Following Bañez, there can be no cause of a voluntary act apart from God and the will itself that fears.¹ Furthermore, if faith were the cause of an act of fear it could just as easily be the efficient cause of charity, which is also in the will. Let such a development follow, then justification would turn out to be principally an operation of faith, not love, since every cause must exercise more operativeness than the effect which it is formally producing.

First corollary. Trustfulness in divine mercy cannot exist without the fear of God. What would otherwise pass as confidence in God is presumption. Lutherans herein err by discarding all fear in the matter of man's justification; and their maxim cannot undo the ruin: "Sin boldly, only believe the more strongly."

Second corollary. Filial fear grows with faith and charity. The reason lies in the improving grasp of the gravity of sin and the fatality of separation from God.

Article 2

Is Purification of the Heart an Effect of Faith?

Statement of the question. Reasons have been alleged for a denial: 1) Faith is in the intellect, not in the heart. 2) Faith coexists with the impureness of mortal sin. 3) Faith fails in purifying the intellect, its immediate container, from its own darkness.

Nevertheless, St. Peter witnesses to an obvious fact (cf. Acts 15:9). God put the Gentile converts on a par with Jewish Christians by purifying their hearts through faith. The present article purports to explain St. Peter's testimony in three conclusions.

First conclusion. Faith operates as a first principle in the purification of the heart.

Authorities already cited build up this doctrine which is capped by

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 9.

the Council of Trent. It was Pauline teaching to start out with: "Faith is the root of all justification." What the Apostle said repeatedly, tradition has echoed consistently,¹ particularly against Protestants, adding thereto, that faith alone does not justify—it needs charity for that; nor can faith by itself purify the heart.

Theological Proof. The heart is purified by tending toward what is above it, God, and not by lapsing toward things on lower levels. But the first principle of motion in lifting the heart up toward God is faith, and this is a prime credible: "Whoever draws near to God, must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder." *Ergo*.

Second conclusion. Even unformed or lifeless faith excludes the stain of error that goes with the measurement of the great high things of God according to material or sensible standards.

Third conclusion. Living faith animated by charity excludes the impurity of mortal sin. It is an inspired proverb: "Charity covers all sins" (Prv. 10:12).

First corollary. Liberal Protestants are weighed in the balance and found wanting. True charity and purity of heart cannot subsist where the true faith is lacking. The reason is that righteousness in the will, with reference to gaining one's last end, implies correct knowledge of the supernatural end, which can be had only through the true faith. There can be no radical rectification of the will, if the aim is not straight toward the real ultimate end, the divinely created goal. The goal can be reached only when the intellect controls the direction of the will. This is good authentic intellectualism, which demands all things to be based on truth and no quarter given to error.

Parenthetically, a supplemental² explanation can clarify details. In order to have the will run right, by means of thorough purification, it must speed toward a real or true object that is good; and the object must be the established goal, the only true ultimate end. This definite pursuit is impossible until the intellect gains assurance as to what this established goal is. Only the true faith can make it known.

Alleged charity, in default of this assurance of faith, cannot be true. It is not an infused theological virtue. It is false and its evaluation should be that of counterfeit coin: "Corruption of the best makes for the worst."

¹ Cf. Council of Trent, sess. 6, chap. 8, can. 9.

² These parenthetical lines are from a footnote by the author.

Second corollary. Purity of heart grows with the increase of living faith, patent through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This matching will be brought out in connection with the gift of understanding in the question that follows. It is a law of the supernatural order that purity of heart cannot flourish in the depths without a corresponding degree of living faith and the gift of spiritual understanding.

QUESTION EIGHT

The Gift of Understanding

Introduction

According to St. Thomas there are two gifts of the Holy Ghost corresponding to faith. They are understanding and knowledge. We shall devote eight articles to the gift of understanding.

For an easier grasp of the materials which we classify as Questions Eight and Nine, familiarity with the Angelic Doctor's text, Ia IIae, q. 68, will be helpful. It is there pointed out that the gifts are habits of a kind to keep one supple and prompt at the beck of the Holy Spirit. Virtues dispose a man to follow the dictates of reason. Gifts are to the soul what sails are to a vessel. The vessel can travel by being rowed; but oarsmen can never equal in advantage the benefit of full-blown sails propelled by currents of wind.

Aquinas affirms that, simply speaking, the gifts rank higher than the moral virtues. They follow a superior rule, namely, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; but they rank beneath the theological virtues which effect the union of ourselves with the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, they contribute somewhat to the perfection of the theological virtues, as will appear from a comparison. They are like fruit which indeed has not in it the perfection of the tree; yet by its ripening, it adds to the tree's maturity.

The eight articles we develop from St. Thomas can be divided into three groups: (1) Definition of the gift of understanding and its relation with faith: Articles 1, 2, 3; (2) In what subjects is the gift of understanding found? In all just men? Is it ever in bad men? Articles 4, 5; (3) What is the relation between understanding and the other gifts, the beatitudes and the fruits of the Holy Ghost? Articles 6, 7, 8.

Article 1

Is Understanding a Gift of the Holy Ghost?

Statement of the question. The following reasons for denying it have been alleged: 1) Understanding is a natural habit. It is the habit that penetrates first principles. 2) Since human intelligence is discursive, it were better to style it the gift of reason. 3) On the other hand, the will is not put down as a gift of the Holy Ghost. Why, then, should the intellect or the understanding be singled out for the distinction?

Conclusion. For man to penetrate the supernatural truth of faith, he has need of the supernatural light called the gift of understanding.

Scriptural Proof. Texts abound, but the classic one is in Isaias. On the Messianic Root of Jesse "the Spirit of the Lord will rest . . . the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord (Is. 11:1-3).

The future tense was required when this prophecy was proclaimed in the eighth century, B.C. But after the first Christian Pentecost the Messiah had come and gone. Since then we know that every just man receives the Holy Spirit and his gifts through a certain participation.¹ It is the common faith of the Fathers that the seven gifts are possessed by Christ in the greatest excellence and are shared in by all the just, through the mystery of participation.

Although Isaias crystallizes the doctrine that engages us, it is spread over too many parts of the Old Testament to leave room for doubting that it was ingrained in Messianic faith from the first. It affected the whole growing deposit of faith, both as a racial heirloom and an individual heritage of piety. Touzard's comment is apposite.² The Old Testament construction is not exclusive. It does not refer restrictingly to the Messiah who was expected. The Book of Sirach extends it to all God's people: "Give ear, my son, and take counsel with understanding" (Sir. 6:24); "Whoever fears God will do what is good." He shall be fed as by

¹ This paragraph, a footnote originally, abridges the doctrine of St. Thomas, *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 68.

² Cf. *Revue Biblique* (April, 1899), p. 232; Gardeil, *Dict. Théol.*, "Dons"; Is. 11:2.

a mother or worthy wife, "with the bread of life and understanding" and his drink will be "the water of wholesome wisdom" (Sir. 15:3).

[Since "Spirit"—in Hebrew, *Ruah*—is of the feminine gender, the motherly quality and marital loyalty of her justice, as the prerogative of a chaste virginal wife, connote a vitalizing psychological slant to the action of the Holy Spirit of God.] "She shall be made strong in him; and he shall not be moved. She shall hold him fast. . . . In the midst of the Church she shall open his mouth and shall fill him with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding and shall clothe him with a robe of glory" (Sir. 15:3-5).

The gifts hang together. Our focus is understanding, a theme common in the Psalms: "I will bless the Lord who has given me understanding" (Ps. 15:7); "I will give thee understanding and I will instruct thee in this way, in which thou shalt go" (Ps. 34:8). Words of this kind bespeak faith in the souls addressed. They who have faith pray in the same sense: "Give me understanding and I will search thy law" (Ps. 118:34); "Give me understanding and I will learn thy commandments" (Ps. 118:73); "Give me understanding and I shall live" (Ps. 118:144); "Give me understanding according to thy word" (Ps. 118:169); "The declaration of thy words gives light. It gives understanding to little ones" (Ps. 118:130)—that is to say, to the humble. It is patent in all citations that the gift demanded is desired by those who are sincere believers and who penetrate the truths of faith in the depths, while viewing the commandments of God as from the heights: "I have gained in understanding beyond the aged; because my search was to know thy commandments" (Ps. 118:100).

Holy Scripture is resonant with understanding: "I wished, and understanding was given to me. I called upon God and the spirit of wisdom came upon me" (Wis. 7:7). The "spirit of wisdom" is often a literary variation for "the spirit of understanding": "The inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding" (Jb. 32:9); (Exod. 31:3); "I have filled (Beseleel) with the spirit of God, with wisdom and understanding and knowledge" (Ex. 31:3).³

St. Matthew preserves our Lord's challenge: "Let him take it, who can" (Mt. 19:12). St. Paul must not be expected to be silent: "May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7); "The Lord will give you understanding in all things" (2 Tm. 2:7); "We pray . . . that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col.

³ Other texts are grouped in concordances; cf. Illumination, Enlighten, Light.

1:9); "May the hearts (of distant converts) be comforted, by being instructed in charity and unto all the riches of fullness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father, and of Christ Jesus: in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3).

Theological Proof. In this connection St. Thomas shows more clearly than in his other works the difference between mind and sense.

Etymologically, intelligence, which is the property of intellect or mind, connotes some sort of interior reading (*intus legere*) or perception. Thus it happens in the physical order that, whereas sense knowledge is occupied exclusively with exterior sensible phenomena, intellectual knowledge or intelligence pierces into a thing's essence. But in the supernatural order, penetration extends to many more interior and concealed elements than nature can comprehend. Natural enlightenment is insufficient to reach them. Faith alone can succeed. And for this accomplishment man requires the particular aid of supernatural illumination. This is what is meant by the gift of spiritual understanding.

The gift of understanding offsets dullness of mind just as knowledge counters ignorance and wisdom counters folly.

The gift of understanding has an immediate relationship with primary supernatural principles in the same way that purely natural intelligence is linked with the first principles of reason. But from this connection with primary truths, it spreads out to cover others.⁴ Cajetan explains: "It is through the gift of understanding that the literal sense of Holy Scripture is discerned in the words of Sacred Scripture; while the other senses are detected in figures—that is, the moral sense, the allegorical, and the parabolic division of the literal sense. It is likewise through the gift of understanding that numerous other intelligible things are learned about, with nothing better to go on than what the senses report. The mutual relations governing causes and effects and enabling the mind to reason forwards or backwards concerning the way they work out are also apprehended by spiritual understanding. In a word, the gift of understanding lends itself to penetrative discernment in all things."

A query. What is the difference between supernatural light conveyed through the gift of understanding and the infused light of faith?

The article following will be more explicit.⁵ For the present, it is enough to state that faith consists in simple knowledge. We assent to its

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 1 ad 2.

⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, a. 2; a. 5 ad 3; a. 6 ad 2.

articles. Understanding brings to faith a certain excellence of knowledge that penetrates (the articles) intimately.

The assent of faith, while virtually complete, may be limited in its explicitness to articles which the Church has definitely formulated. Understanding pierces this shell with a perception of the truth which it encloses. The substance of faith is the actual assent to the primary truths of the supernatural order, because of the authority of God who reveals them. The gift of understanding excels through its mental penetration of the particular truths God has made known. These explanations fit into the doctrine which we summarize as follows from St. Thomas, where he treats of the gifts in general.⁶

The gifts are habits by which man is disposed to move promptly, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a way superior to the dictates of reason, when reason is illuminated only by faith. The gifts thus surpass in excellence the moral virtues that create a disposition toward righteousness, growing out of rational direction according to the light of faith. At the same time they fall below the theological virtues by which souls are united to the Holy Ghost and by which, at least as remote norms, the gifts themselves are regulated.

In our premises the gift of understanding is at least remotely regulated by faith. Its functions are always concerned with the truths of faith or the motives of credibility. It therefore postulates faith, faith that is alive (as we shall emphasize in Articles 4 and 5). It remains true, however, that in a modified sense, the gift of understanding is more perfect than faith. It adds a degree of mental penetration made possible by the special inspiration and illumination of the Holy Ghost. In this respect the Spirit of God in person becomes the proximate rule of the particular act issuing from the gift.

From the angle of the proximate rule of any operation through a gift, an accurate distinction may be brought out by a comparison. Absolutely speaking, a tree is more perfect than the abundance of fruit produced by it. But the tree with all its fruitage is more perfect than it would be without fruitage. In divine things the contrary is true. All creation put together adds nought to the perfection of God the Creator. Similarly, a substance is more perfect than any of its operations, absolutely speaking. Nevertheless, a substance gains in perfection by operating. Hence, the maxim: "Everything exists for what it ought to do." As Cajetan put it: The immediate purpose of every entity is achieved once it gets in operation.

⁶ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 68.

This article of St. Thomas establishing understanding as a gift of the Holy Ghost has in it a fullness of doctrine that dispenses from the need of investigating or analyzing in detail the inspired passages we have presented from the Old Testament and the New.

Article 2

Is the Gift of Understanding Compatible with the Ingrained Obscureness of Faith?

Herein lies a difficulty: 1) Along the way to heaven, mysteries remain always incomprehensible. 2) Faith concerns truths that are not apparent. 3) Besides, it is impossible for the same thing to be seen, as long as it is an object of belief. Thus it occurred that our Lord "opened the minds of his disciples," by imparting to them an "understanding of the Scriptures" (Lk. 24:45). As St. Gregory observes, understanding throws mind-light on the things it hears.¹

First conclusion. It is not the function of infused understanding, the gift, to bestow a knowledge of supernatural mysteries as they exist in themselves, in their own essence; for, as long as the period of faith endures, those divine secrets are never made intrinsically evident. They are known here below through the outward testimony of revelation, not as they shall be perceived in the light of glory which is reserved for the world to come. Not even the intellectual visions of the Blessed Trinity, described by St. Teresa as her own personal experience, convey intrinsic evidence of the sublime mystery. It is not as though the Saint were beholding by sight that was immediate. As long as vision remains intermediate, partial, or indirect, the grounds for believing are intact. Its representations about the Trinity, for instance, may be most beautiful; but so are the theological analogies prolifically expounded by great theologians. It follows that we know through faith, "in a dark manner," what God is in himself, what we may define as God's intimate life; and yet, the most infallible human utterances will fall short in describing God as he is "in himself." They can only expound and amplify what "the heavenly Father and the Son" (Mt. 11:27) have chosen to communicate through witnesses. The communication is a revelation.

Second conclusion. The gift of understanding contributes and im-

¹ Cf. St. Gregory, *Morals*, chap. 15. We are here dealing with the *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 2, "Sed contra."

proves an imperfect mental grasp of supernatural mysteries by manifesting the reasonable stand of never departing from what faith teaches, through a preference for other things that outwardly appear. Whatever is contrary to faith is sub-zero. The light of spiritual understanding prevents the mind from swaying, through this anchorage. It strengthens it in breaking loose from all apparent contradictions, no matter whence they arise, whether from false views that originate so frivolously among creatures or from erroneous interpretations or from constructions put upon the mysteries of faith themselves. In this manner the gift of understanding increases the brand of intelligence that is made possible for believers, in a wholesome way. It confers a fullness of intelligence bearing in upon a conviction to this effect: once truths divine have been duly proposed for actual belief, there can no longer be any hesitancy about them. The faithful herein do nothing but prolong the workings of the beautiful providence which our Lord inaugurated at Emmaus by opening the disciples' minds to understand. The interior grace was in the form of light shining in upon the first Christian soul. This explanation of St. Gregory holds good for the Pentecostal outburst and for the glaring lights and bewildering shadows that followed thereupon, and alternate all through the Acts of the Apostles.

Third conclusion. It is true, nevertheless, that the higher light of understanding can sometimes increase the obscurity already inherent in certain truths of faith. One instance is in the penetration of the most exalted among divine perfections. The refinements of God's higher attributes are a challenge, overriding all that can be represented by a distinct idea. [The subject will be treated in Article 7]. They occasion contemplation in the dark, according to what might be described as astronomical magnitudes. God towers mentally above all things, concepts included. We see this through the gift of understanding, insofar as we are guided "by the inaccessible light in which God abides." God dwells in light no creature can approach.² (Creatures may, however, be individually drawn up into it, to serve special divine purposes, as, for instance, were Moses, Paul, and John in Patmos.)

Mystics have excelled in the gift of understanding as a precious habit. The dark night, identified with passivity of the spirit, has made them superior agencies of transmission, for a knowledge of God's unspeakableness, high above every other form of knowledge recognized

² Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In 1 Tm.* 6:16, also on Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 1, lect. 1; chap. VII, lect. 4.

by philosophy or produced by speculative theology. Extolling the gift of understanding, St. Paul singles it out as penetrating "the deep things of God," not with the filmy success that would be reputed to make them evident; but with the grandeur that brings to their obscurity an additional transluminous darkness caused by dazzling splendor that ultimately blinds. So great is the disproportionateness of its substantial light in contrast with the debility of the human intellect. Owls' eyes were not made to see things that grow resplendent in the sun. If they do see them, it is after the manner of what men's eyes are said to see in the dark.

The great mystics, among whom Blessed Angelo de Foligno was outstanding, designate the Deity as the Grand Darkness in which all divine attributes can be identified without confusion. Theologians go further and state that the Godhead, as existent in itself, and as seen by the blessed, comprises all divine attributes; and with them the three triune personalities, as an act visibly enfolded and unfolding. Such a vision is prepared for by a very inferior concept along the "narrow way"; although it is a notion sublime and more excellent than all other human ideas, taken cumulatively or singly. As subsistent being, the concept wraps up within its own act all of God's attributes and the three divine Persons therewith. Its act is its being, a being that comprehends infinitude in wisdom, love, mercy, justice, and the rest. Deity or the Godhead, as an object of clear vision, actually manifests its attributes and all perfections expressly. But we, as pilgrims on the way to God, are not competent to receive such exalted positive knowledge, nor is it possible for us to conceive it, save as an unapproachable eminence. Our condition is that of gazers who might discern accurately the seven colors of the rainbow without having ever perceived the pure white light of which they are refractions.

Godliness cannot be shared with holiness in God, except through sanctifying grace. Mere being as such is shared in by stones and the mineral world. Life is participated in by the vegetative world; knowledge, by the animal world; intelligence, by the world of human minds.³

Fourth conclusion. It can happen that the gift of understanding may convey sound-mindedness from above, with perfect intelligence of the natural truths linked with the virtue of religion. These would be speculative or moral truths: the motives of credibility currently styled the

³ The implications of the Porphyrian tree are borrowed from the author's footnote.

"evidences of Christianity." And through these accessories the gift of understanding would become an inexhaustible reinforcement for the conclusions bodied forth in Apologetics.

Article 3

Is the Gift of Understanding Both Speculative and Practical?

The Psalmist's praise takes an affirmative answer for granted: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. Good understanding is the lot of all who foster it" (Ps. 110:10). The reverent comportment that follows constitutes obedience to the Law of God with filial fear, understandingly.

Conclusion. The gift of understanding is chiefly speculative. By secondary derivation or application, it becomes practical. This means that truly intelligent persons keep God's law. They do truth, as St. John declares. Their mentality is not satisfied with penetrating the first principles of faith, merely to behold them. It pierces into the nature of human operations, which, consistently, should fit into and be subordinated to rational measurements that are eternal. In this way, the gift of understanding contributes to the perfecting of the higher reason which supervises the establishment of concord between human activities and eternal designs that should be kept constantly in view in order to integrate personal homage with regard to God's universal counsel.

The high excellence of spiritual understanding is not compromised by stooping to consider inferior human contingencies and deeds; for these humble things become exalted, not within themselves, but by reason of the good they are made to serve, through the free workings of an eternal law that ordains their use to an ultimate supernatural end.

"By how much the more one's cognitive power extends to many things, the nobler it is." This is a culminating truth in the Aquinas' answers to the first two objections. If properly assimilated, it would have a remedial effect on a certain type of specialists who grow conceited and exclusive, owing to excessive and material preoccupations about their own peculiar faculty. Almost machine-like, they are gripped with a sense of sufficiency that works more or less automatically, in the direction of a hardening and shrinking view of their normal field, due to ex-

travagant particularization. The blight amounts to a materialization of knowledge, a mechanization of fixed ideas. They no longer bask in an atmosphere. Ideologies drive far away and inflict a blackout on higher and more universal principles. The catastrophe would be averted if leaders saw eye to eye with Donoso Cortez, who used to say: "Nobody is more practical than the great contemplatives." St. Teresa was a paragon of this sort.

Three conclusions. First, sacred theology, even humanly acquired, is eminently speculative and practical.¹ It is a participation of divine knowledge that accrues to us through it. Secondly, infused faith has a twofold aim: it is concerned with mysteries to believe and precepts to carry out. Thirdly, wisdom supplements this double trend of infused faith.² It is not surprising, therefore, that these characteristic gifts affecting intelligence are, in certain cases, more manifest in the domain of speculation, while in other instances their obviousness is discerned in practical issues.

Article 4

Is the Gift of Understanding Possessed by All Just Men?

This is a major issue in the mystical theology of our day because of its bearing on the controversy as to whether infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is a normal requisite for sanctity.

Statement of the question. Our conclusion is affirmative, but at first sight a negative answer would seem reasonable: 1) There are so many people in the state of grace whose minds are decidedly dull. 2) As for the knowledge one needs of supernatural things, strictly speaking, faith alone suffices for salvation. 3) The gift of understanding vanishes in holy people now and then; for it often happens that they admit they are at a loss to understand the Scriptures or are thrown into a quandary about how they should act.

Scriptural Proof. "I am the Light of the World. He who follows me walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). Our Lord here declares equivalently that the possession of grace, the "light of life," brings with it the gift of understanding, enabling the recipient

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 1, a. 4.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 2 ad 3; q. 45, a. 3 ad 1.

to accept promptly and with docility divine illuminations bearing particularly on things necessary for salvation. The Apostle of love points out that it is "his unction that teaches the faithful of all things" (1 Jn. 2:27). That is saying nothing of the Psalms in which the soul of the just asks repeatedly to be enlightened by God. One needs a permanent disposition to profit with docility from the illuminations thus accorded.

Theological Proof. In every just man his will must be upright in its trend toward the last supernatural goal, the absolute ultimate end of life. But this righteousness of will presupposes a knowledge of supernatural truth, which is impossible without the gift of understanding. Therefore, in all just men there must exist the gift of understanding and other gifts with which it is connected; especially when deliberation is required to pick one's steps and make for sure footing along the narrow way to eternal glory. Many a perplexity arises, many an entanglement is encountered, when one's judgment is required to keep correct in the face of conflicting obligations. It may be a matter of choice forced upon one in matters no less important than religion and country. St. Maurice and his companions were in such a fix. These Christian soldiers welcomed unescapable martyrdom. Rather than obey the Roman emperor who demanded that they should offer sacrifice to idols, they chose magnanimously to be put to death.

In the minor premise a difficulty needs to be unlocked. Why is it that the light of infused faith is not sufficient? Let Cajetan respond: The insufficiency of faith is due to the imperfect nature of participation in divine light, through the light of faith.¹

By itself alone faith does not convey the right practical appraisalment of the last end. If it did, there would be no such thing as conversion to the faith by one who remains turned away from the last end through guilty attachment to a mortal sin. Such a conversion, though spiritually abhorrent, is not metaphysically repugnant; it makes peace with a practical error. Its faith is real and true, but "dead." Let it be enlivened by the infusion of charity and the convert's faith grows meritorious, without, however, imparting sufficient light to guarantee the stable practical appraisalment of morals and the last end to which they lead. The difference between lifeless and enlivened faith is affected radically in the will. The appraisalment at stake is located in the intellect.

This is a keen observation of Cajetan; too clear to be accounted

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 68, aa. 1-2; cf. also Article 5, the next article in this present study.

subtle. It shows expressly why every just man should have, in addition to the infused light of faith, the more exquisite light of the gift of understanding, in order to grasp and to apply the truths of faith adequately, as the means provided for reaching the last end. These two, faith and understanding, are both preliminary necessities for salvation. The congruousness of the salutary providence is especially patent, since Christian virtue, as an animated unit, functions as a spiritual organism. It is all important that the organism be normalized through its own inherent perfection, so that, in a conflict between personal obligations, one's preferences and deliberate choice will never wander from the way of truth. Intelligence that has to be exercised in circumstances of this kind, involves the gift of spiritual understanding, of the sort that asserts itself in concrete decisions, like abstention from the vice of onanism on the part of parents who are weighted heavily through patient cross-bearing, in rearing a large family in poverty.

Our comments on the objections with which this article starts are now in order:

1. Obtuseness in one's natural mentality need never interfere with the sufficiency of instruction administered interiorly by God's Holy Spirit, touching "all things that are necessary for one's salvation." This is the precise sense of St. John's certification: "His unction teaches us" (1 Jn. 2:27), as a guide "in all" contingencies. Therefore, whenever in politics or diplomacy there is disagreement between Church and state—as is bound to happen in determinate intricacies—state functionaries have great need of the gift of spiritual understanding.

2. The faithful may be endlessly graded according to the measure of appreciation each soul has for the various truths taught by the Church as revealed by God. But the varieties of more and less relate to capacities and plenitude in the individual believers. All are alike on two boundaries: First, whatever is duly proposed, must be believed. Secondly, there must be no deviation, however slight, from what is thus believed. This stalwart conscience is the asset of firm believers when they are grievously tempted. It serves them well, and preserves them in default of the scientific acumen that theologians develop through years of specialized training. In itself it represents a providential activity of the gift of understanding.

3. As for the permanence of the gift, understanding never fails holy aspirants to salvation, with regard to what is formally necessary. As for accessories, it may not always be duly enlivened or enlivening. It may

even be limited through incompetence, thereby gaining a special advantage, through humility, in becoming consciously released from serious dangers through pride.

Passive purifications furnish an illustration. These trials often take the form of grave temptations against faith and hope. Certain mysteries, specifically, predestination and the torments of eternity put together, prove overwhelming. How can they be true? Yet, through these tortures the soul is made acquainted with the "deep things of God." Satan grows jealous and takes the offensive. He persecutes. As a result the inferior mind is beclouded. Even the motives of credibility appear divested of force. Miracles no longer convince. Prophecies wane. The life of the Church has been denuded of its wondrousness. Sucked into this maelstrom, Aquinas sketches their achieved lot. Souls of this caliber will not budge from their infused intellectual conviction: "Mysteries revealed must be believed"; and from them "no manner of deviation is allowed," to the right or to the left. This is the gift of understanding working out. It never fails holy souls when they need it, in discerning what things bind necessarily in the preoccupation of salvation.

Thanks to the enlightenment of this gift, in emergencies or in straits such as those described, souls take to praying like the apostles: "Lord, increase our faith . . . help our unbelief"; "Bring it to pass that I may believe most firmly in thy Word"; "May I find an imperishable refuge in Prime Truth. God of my salvation, help me."

The doctrine of this article has a basis in far-flung inspired passages. They crystallize in the Psalter and in the piety of those who assimilate its spirit, beginning with St. Thomas. It is a divine instinct that moves the faithful to seek light from God: "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1); "O Lord, my God, enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death" (Ps. 12:3-4); "O Lord, my God enlighten my darkness" (Ps. 17:29). This exclamation is that of a believer, whose assent to revealed truths shines as light in his mind; yet, he craves for more brightness, such as would increase from piercing more intimately the meaning of what he has embraced: "Make thy face shine upon Thy servant" (Ps. 118:35); "Night shall be light as the day" (Ps. 138:12).

The Psalmist's piety, stimulated by the desire of divine enlightenment or the gift of understanding, is orthodox everywhere: "You who fear the Lord, love him and your hearts shall be enlightened" (Eccl. 2:10); "Come to him and be enlightened" (Ps. 33:6); may the "Father of

glory, give to you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of [our Lord Jesus Christ] and may the eyes of your heart be enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of his calling and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints . . ." (Eph. 1:18). This greeting, which is addressed to all the faithful of the primitive Church among the Ephesians is of universal import. It applies to all just men among Christians.

Article 5

Can Anybody in the State of Mortal Sin Possess the Gift of Understanding?

Statement of the question. Since mortal sin does not exclude the gift of prophecy, why should it be incompatible with the gift of understanding?

Conclusion. Outside the state of sanctifying grace, nobody possesses the infused gift of understanding.

Scriptural Proof. Jesus taught: "Everyone who has heard of the Father and has learned, comes to me" (Jn. 6:45). Hearing has reference to faith. Learning is something over and above. It concerns the same truths that have been heard; but an ability presses further the perception of them and their inner penetration.¹ It is the gift of understanding thus operating and driving the soul Christwards, as it were, through charity. The experience is unknown to the sensual or animal man. He has no insight into "things that are of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them" (1 Cor. 2:14).²

Theological Proof. There can be no "gift" of understanding in the soul until the intellect is moved by the Holy Ghost to esteem correctly the practical impact of the last end upon one's responsible deeds. The latter should all be made to count for "heaven first" (cf. Mt. 6:33; Lk. 12:31). But this does not occur when the soul is deliberately turned against the last end and is disdaining it in practice by indulging in mortal sin. Therefore, no one who is guilty of mortal sin may claim the "gift" of understanding as an actual possession.

Lifeless faith is the only brand that remains, once charity is for-

¹ Cf. St. Gregory, *Morals*, chap. 15.

² Cf. commentary of St. Thomas, *De Revelatione*, I, p. 180.

feited. Its very lifelessness prevents it from imposing, much less embracing, the righteous estimate that is due, relative to the last end. The soul is too numb. It is through understanding that human intelligence penetrates the connection between the last end and the deeds that are proportioned to it. The gift of wisdom judges from above what understanding penetrates below. Cajetan thinks this way, and he is our leader here.³

Compatibility of prophecy with mortal sin, Jonas-like, comes from the difference that exists between degrees of enlightenment that proceed from God's Holy Spirit, before one has been justified. Auroral graces of this kind never equal in perfection the sunburst proper, to which the gift of understanding is comparable. Prophetic light suffuses the mind enough to clarify the particular truths that are to be communicated. But, as the case of Jonas illustrates, this is quite a different thing from adapting one's whole course or career rigorously to the last end as the chief tremendous practical issue. Spiritual understanding is geared to that mastering goal. Neither faith alone nor prophecy is sufficient for it.

Article 6

How Is Understanding Distinguished from the Other Gifts of the Holy Ghost?

The other gifts fall into two groups, because of their subjective location. God-fearingness, piety, and fortitude adhere to the will, their vigor being eminently appetitive. The gift of understanding is rooted in the intellect. The second group, wisdom, counsel, and knowledge are also in the intellect. The gift of understanding is distinguished from them by its formal act of penetration. Its intuitive nature sets it apart from judgment. The other three gifts have to do with right judgment. Wisdom judges formally of divine things; knowledge of created things; and counsel of human deeds and performances. Through this classification the Angelic Doctor improves, and to a certain extent corrects, a panel on the subject, whose less perfect form is offered in the *Summa theologiae*, Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 4. He here manifests a parallel with the intellectual virtues, inasmuch as the apprehension of first principles is

³ Cf. Cajetan's commentary, a. 6.

ascribed to understanding, whereas the domain of judgment spreads out through the others, namely, through wisdom, knowledge, prudence, and art.

It is interesting to note supplementally that certain metaphysicians show exquisite intelligence in discerning. They apprehend readily and take in the manifold implications of a truth at a glance. Yet, they flounder deplorably in judging. They are neither wise nor prudent.¹

But besides apprehension and judgment there is a third operation of the intellect: the process of reasoning. Apprehension and judgment are perfected by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The derivative of reasoning is inferior to the gifts. It is a human skill. The characteristic of the gifts is to proceed intuitively [through apprehending] and in a way that is suprahuman or divine by participation. The gifts perfect mentally and often in ways that would find too much gray matter in the brains an obstruction. What students often learn laboriously from the articles in St. Thomas were placid intuitions for the Angelic Doctor. The reason very likely may be gathered from an observation of Aquinas: "Dullness of mind wrecks intelligence; folly wrecks wisdom; and ignorance, knowledge. Precipitate action is always ill-advised."²

We have said that faith assents to mysteries; the gift of understanding penetrates them. Those are two distinct and formal modes of approach. Many are the students who assent to Thomism—but they fail to penetrate it. There will be an occasion later on³ of amplifying the supremacy of wisdom over all other gifts. It develops a kind of second nature, or connaturalness in one's aptitude and tastes for things divine. The efficient and formal cause is enlightenment ascribable to the Holy Ghost. A direct effect is good and correct judgment concerning things that are divine and all other things in their light. Spiritual taste and relish are begotten of the underlying charity. It is a kind of impregnation that makes knowledge about God savory and affective, experimental even, as of One who, in fulfillment of a promise, abides and sweetly operates within the soul (cf. Jn. 6:57, 15:5).

Cajetan remarks precisely what we submit as a fitting close for this article. Faith and the gifts revolve, so to speak, around the correct and righteous practical estimate that needs to be safeguarded whenever any issue arises involving the last end. First of all, there is the assent which

¹ This was a footnote in the original.

² *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 15, a. 3.

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 45.

is furnished through faith. Secondly, there must be perception that is supplied through the gift of understanding. Then follows judgment that may be related to any one or two or to all three gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and counsel. The judgment will ultimately bear on the last end, wisdom; yet attention may have to be focused simultaneously on intermediate ends of conscientious knowledge; or on particular implementations counseled as expedient here and now.

It would not do, however, to mutilate the spiritual organism of virtue and the gifts. Nor should these endowments be mechanized through detachments or isolation. The factors are more like different muscles, so many of which operate concurrently in the graceful gestures of an arm—they are like the blendings of diverse colors and shades artistically mixed and distributed by an artist in producing a human countenance on canvas.⁴

Article 7

Which One of the Beatitudes Listed in the Gospel Corresponds to the Gift of Understanding?

The answer to this question is the sixth beatitude, namely: "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." St. Augustine puts it this way. The sixth operation of the Holy Ghost, which is through the gift of understanding, effects the characteristic endowment of the clean of heart. It enables them to see, as it were, clear-eyed, what is impervious to natural sight.

There is a numerical inversion in the matching of the gifts and the beatitudes. This is why the sixth beatitude is said to correspond with the second gift. Isaias enumerates the gifts from wisdom downwards. The Gospel lists the beatitudes from poverty of spirit upwards. The two are a descending and an ascending series of members that match. Both parts of the beatitude are related to understanding; cleanness of heart by way of merit; the vision of God as its reward.

1. The merit of cleanness of heart begins with the dispositions that are lodged in the soul through the virtues, and are developed by those gifts which, being appetitive, stir up desire. But the progress must be

⁴ This paragraph is from the author's footnote.

interiorly chastening. The complementary work in the mind must clear away errors and neutralize the domination of phantasms. It is purification through the gift of understanding. Its greatest depths are reached in the passive cleansing of the spirit. They presuppose an achieved passage through the black night of the senses. In the earlier tunneling through and away from sense life, it was the gift of knowledge that wrought the conviction of vanity's being coextensive with all created things. In this universal vacuousness, understanding discerns the heights attained by divine Truth, which is revealed by being let down from above—yet, without ever ceasing to tower immeasurably above all standards that can be expressed in terms of sense. It is this perception that integrates and increases cleanness of heart.

2. "They shall see God." This premium, attached to the sixth beatitude, draws souls toward the consummate perfection of the fatherland, the beatific vision of God's essence. But along the way, less perfect or imperfect degrees of spiritual insight into what God is develop through the gift of understanding. More accurately, wayfarers learn more and more about God by realizing all that he is not and cannot be. In other words, they mount to higher summits, in their temporal vision of God, the better they discern God's transcendence to be infinitely above everything that can be comprehended by any created or creatable intellect. Such intuitive percepts spread out into the black light or trans-luminous darkness of exalted infused contemplation. It is their experimental reality that accounts for the asseveration of Aquinas: "Even in this life, such a chastening of insight becomes possible through the gift of understanding, that, in a way, God himself can be seen." It is what the sixth beatitude affirms.¹

Nevertheless, there is a missing link—an abyss—between the darkest of black nights and the inaccessible deity. The last concept has not been wiped out. The positive and intuitive or immediate vision of God's essence is broken into, by any concept. No matter how illustrative they may be, concepts between God and man are in the end barriers to union with the supreme and simple act which God is. Nevertheless, this commentary is true. Thanks to the gift of spiritual understanding, it is objective intelligence that the sovereign Deity raises high above all perfections that are classified as *simpliciter simplices*. Absolutely the simplest forms of all simple perfections exist in God in an

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 69, a. 2, ad 3.

eminently formal manner. Emphasize the "formal" existence, for it is not merely virtual. It is a kind of existence different from the colors in a rainbow. These bands of beauty exist virtually in the pure white light shining on the vapor from the sun. But the pure white light does not contain the separate forms of the red, yellow, and blue, the green, violet, orange, and brown. Its whiteness, however, does contain virtually all seven colors in the rainbow. In no such wise do we speak of God and his attributes. God is formal being. He is formally one, true, good, living, understanding, willing, loving, providing, predestining—he is almighty—not virtually any one of these things, but really and formally all of them together. What is more, God's perfections are all one and identical, through an eminence inherent in the higher formal order called Godhead or Deity. Deity contains in itself, through an eminent and formal manner, not only its own selfness or being, but all forms of being, so as to be properly described in itself as Super-being. The designation involves a superiority that affects all transcendent angles with which metaphysics is acquainted; oneness, truth, life, mind, and the rest. "Sovereign" and "supreme" are English terms applied to God's being, to signify what is conveyed through the term "Deity." For our present definite purpose, it is enough to state that Super-being has to be above number (Augustine), a super-unity, therefore, and just as rigorously super-true, super-good, super-living, super-understanding—and honored accordingly with super-exaltation.² It is this super-eminence of the Godhead that mystics are referring to, when, like Blessed Angela di Foligno, they specify "the great darkness," the "transluminous night." Sanctifying grace is a participation in it, a remote beginning of it.

We come to the knowledge of these marvels in two ways. The speculative way is through philosophy and scientific theology. Neither of these two sources is metaphysically incompatible with mortal sin. The more exquisite and higher experimental knowledge, however, cannot be genuine, if he who makes a boast of it is guilty of mortal sin. The superior grade of knowledge is penetrative. It is not merely looking at the truth as a diagram; it is piercing into what it sees, through infused intelligence. Such is the gift of understanding. During the passive night of the spirit the experience may be coupled with temptations against faith. The soul may be disturbed; but the higher insight is sharpened, so that intelligence melts into the placid gift of wisdom, which brings

² Cf. Cajetan's commentary on the *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 39, a. 1.

with it the spiritual discernment and judgment about divine things that operates like a second nature; and for that reason is called connatural. This refinement of the spirit frequently teems with joy.

Article 8

What Fruit of the Holy Ghost Corresponds to the Gift of Understanding?

There is one characteristic fruit that matches understanding, namely, the certitude of faith, which St. Paul denominates by the simple name of "faith" (cf. Gal. 5:23). The nature of a fruit, as ascribed to God's Holy Spirit, is that of an effect, maturing from virtue in the soul, after the manner of a terminal bud that blossoms and then grows luscious and fecund for the transmission of seed. Fruit is a gratifying ultimate. But the gift of understanding has as its principal purpose the development of certitude in faith. It penetrates the mysteries of faith and establishes an awareness that they contain nothing which can ever be out of joint with the infused habit and virtue of faith. For this reason, the fruit called "faith" is a product of the gift of understanding. The culminating fruit among all is joy. It is, so to speak, the ultimate fruit. What causes rejoicing is divine truth, and the union with God for which it prepares. Joy pertains to the will but its chief preliminary is the gift of understanding.

Degrees of understanding: purgative, illuminative, unitive.

There are three degrees of understanding. We are dealing objectively with the gift. Its three degrees are the same as those of charity, from which the gift is inseparable.¹ They are the possession, respectively, of beginners, proficients, and the perfect.

First Degree: The gift of understanding in beginners takes the shape of a realization. It roots in them a conviction of how necessary it is for salvation to cling to the truths of faith. They become clear-sighted concerning the principal motives of credibility; different individuals taking to one or to another of them preferably, according to circumstances. Certain minds are moved powerfully by what the prophets testified about the Messiah. Others are stirred by the examples of holiness fur-

¹ Cf. Denis the Carthusian, *De Dons*, tr. 2, a. 34.

nished by Christ and his apostles. Still others are awakened by the sanctity and fortitude of the martyrs, without excluding other saints. Then there are admiring thinkers who yield to the wondrousness of miracles; while their silent comrades are subdued by personal experiences which they welcome as surprise inspirations and interior visits of God.

Second Degree: Souls making headway in the growth of the spirit are classified as proficient. They descend to great interior depths; then they scale and cross heightening summits, for the gift of understanding is constantly opening up new vistas before them. Reverently they delve into the mysteries of faith from many, if not from all, new angles. They enjoy imperceptibly an illuminating guidance issuing forth from the Spirit of God; this operation is one that improves them through the gift of spiritual understanding.

The newly expanding views were dwelt upon as a panorama by Pope Pius IX. He exclaimed: "How numerous, how wonderful, how splendid, are the available reasons, by which the human mind should be completely subdued in face of the divine religion founded by Christ. . . . They prove that nothing is more certain than our faith. Nothing is more secure. Nothing is holier. Nothing is based on sounder principles. This faith is the mistress of life, the directress of salvation. It aims at the expulsion of all vices, for it is the fecund parent and nurse of virtues. It was sealed for its mission and confirmed by the birth of Jesus Christ, its author, by his life, death, resurrection, wisdom, prodigious works, and predictions. This Christian faith is everywhere resplendent with the light of heavenly doctrine . . . through the luster of so many miracles, by the constancy of so many martyrs, by the glory of so many saints. . . . It is this faith that has formulated and promulgated the salutary laws of Christ, and that is forging ahead with increasing power from day to day, notwithstanding most cruel persecutions. Through this faith, the standard of the Cross has invaded all lands and seas, from the rising to the setting of the sun. It has penetrated among all peoples; it has made its way into the midst of all races, no matter how dehumanized and barbarous they have become. . . . It has shone with divine light and it has spread allegiance to the sweetest of all yokes, which is that of Christ, by announcing peace and good things in his name to all. The radiance of divine wisdom and power is so palpable in all these manifestations, as to compel the mind and thought of every observer to understand with ease that Christian faith is the work of God" (Denz. 1638).

The marvelous synthesis and harmony outlined here by His Holiness comprehends and animates all motives of credibility. One grows up into them; the masterfulness of understanding imparted to them by the gift becomes progressively more apparent, as the disciple, no longer a beginner, advances through the illuminative to the unitive stage of spiritual life. This is the attainment of men made perfect through charity.²

Three hundred years before Pope Pius IX penned his admirable encomium of Christian faith, St. John of the Cross had put into intelligible form the following doctrinal statement: "The illuminative way is the way of infused contemplation."³

The primary object of the illuminative way is not the motives of credibility, or as we say currently, "the evidence of Christianity." It is the mysteries of faith themselves grasped in a higher way and brighter light than at first. St. John specifies: "After the passive purification of the senses, the soul takes flight in a new direction. It is in the path of the spirit, in the company of proficients and the perfect. The way itself receives a new name. It is the illuminative way or the way of infused contemplation. God himself here nourishes and invigorates. Discursiveness ceases in the soul. The new life is quite above and different from its previous self-centered activity. . . . *Dios de suyo anda apacentando, y reficionando el alma, sin discurso ni ayuda activa con industria de la misma alma.*

From this it follows that the gift of understanding in the second degree throws light on the mysteries of faith both below, above, and all around. It shows how Christ our Lord "from being in the form of God . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a servant"; how profoundly "did he humble himself when he became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). In this perspective, one's realization or consciousness sprouts forth from greater depths with regard to the infinite gravity of mortal sin—the malice of Satan and the necessity of reparation, both personal and collective. In a far more exalted manner, God's unsearchable perfections are thrust before one's gaze: the infinitude of his justice and of his mercy; and by an opposite reaction, the nothingness of all created things. These illuminations from the gift of understanding are communicated in the passive night of the spirit. In this darkness, the higher mysteries soar the dimmer they seem to grow; but their obscureness is transluminous. The blinding rays of in-

² This panoramic sketch by Pope Pius IX is in an extensive footnote.

³ St. John of the Cross, *The Obscure Night*, Bk. 1, chap. 14.

telligence convey something incomparably superior to natural evidence. They force the contemplative into an overwhelming paradox of wondrous black light or dazzling blindness, in which an unspeakable clearness is associated with the impenetrable night of God's divinity. It is the abode of the Deity, the "Light inaccessible" wherein rapturousness witnesses to Truth as the Ineffable (cf. 1 Tm. 6:16).

The impact of transluminous darkness occurs on the border between two worlds at strife. Storms of diabolical temptations grow furious against faith and hope. In this passive night of the spirit there is, underneath the most profound influx of an understanding that purifies, a rending of the soul, so to speak, by the extreme perversity of diabolical influences bent on hatred and eternal warfare against everything that produces Christian perfection. But in God's saints, all things, even temptations stirred up by Satanic revolutions, are conducive to good. Faith and hope become heroic, thanks to the gift which fortifies both with heavenly refinements of understanding.

The teaching of St. John of the Cross is more lucid than that of Dionysius the Carthusian. The latter is more intent upon the development of the gifts extensively. He is less keen with regard to their intensive growth. Yet, intensive increase has the greater importance; it underlies the extensive. The reason is made clear by Aquinas. By how much the more a virtue spreads itself out through manifold effects, by so much the more does it gain higher rank in nobility and intensity. Indeed, it is intensiveness within that causes the extensiveness without. The same is true of all forms of knowledge and gifts.

Third Degree: The question here concerns perfect men. Their characteristic advantage in the unitive way is an outcome of the gift of understanding. Their insight has been chastened to an extreme, so that their interior gaze is able to consider the mysteries of faith and enjoy the contemplation of them habitually. There is an elevation of mind that is conversant, through secret contemplativeness, with the Most Holy Trinity abiding in them as in living tabernacles. It was through intimacy of this sort that St. Paul identified God's revelation of "the Spirit who searches all things, even the deep secrets of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). "We have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God." That is why "we compare spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:12-13, 16). Who has known the mind of the Lord? "We have the mind of Christ" (Rom. 11:34). No wonder that St. Paul was moved to pray for the Ephesians: "May the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ

... grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit with might, unto the inward man . . . that you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ which surpasses all knowledge; that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:14, 16-19).⁴

In this third degree, Psalm prayers, begging enlightenment and the "illuminations of God" have their highest significance and are listened to and graciously accorded. Instances can be easily multiplied: "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1); "Night shall be my light in my pleasures" (Ps. 138:11); "Thou lightest my lamp, O, God" (Ps. 17:20); "Enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death" (Ps. 12:4); "O my God, enlighten my darkness" (Ps. 17:29); "Make thy face shine upon thy servant" (Ps. 138:135); "Night shall be light as the day" (Ps. 138:12). And why? St. Luke offers the key: "To enlighten them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk. 1:79); "Come to him and be enlightened" (Ps. 33:6); "That you may know the hope of his calling" (Eph. 1:18); "I will bless the Lord who has given me understanding" (Ps. 15:7); "Give me understanding and I will search thy law" (Ps. 118:34); "Give me understanding and I will learn thy commandments" (Ps. 118:73); "Give me understanding and I shall live" (Ps. 118:144); "The declaration of thy words gives light and to little ones, understanding" (Ps. 118:130); "Give me understanding according to thy word" (Ps. 118:169).

The piety of the Psalmist is respected as a norm by our Lord in dealing with his disciples: "Are you also yet without understanding? . . . Do you not understand? . . . To eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man" (Matt. 15:16-17, 20). St. Paul prayed that the Colossians "might be filled with the knowledge of (God's) will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding . . ." (Col. 1:9), that they might be comforted "unto all riches of the fullness of understanding . . . regarding the mystery of God and Christ Jesus" (Col. 2:2).⁵

It is certain that the gift of understanding, like the other six, is connected with charity. It is increased, therefore, according as the infused habit of charity itself increases. Nobody can have perfect charity without having a proportionate degree of infused understanding to go with

⁴ Compare St. John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love," verse 1.

⁵ These citations in the original seem to have been jotted down loosely and from memory. Their argumentative impact, however, is not weakened thereby.

it. Generally speaking, God's Holy Spirit inspires and enlightens souls in such a way that the degree of infused gifts is an index of his influence, except in the presence of an impediment interposed accidentally. Wherefore, as St. John of the Cross indicates, infused contemplation which issues particularly from this gift, belongs appropriately to the illuminative, and much more to the unitive, degree of God-love. Along those two ways lies the normal route to holiness.

It is impossible for us to doubt this explanation, after reflecting on the great number and the clearness of traditional and theological testimonies. The different phenomena in the history of the saints are not, therefore, diversified by the absence or presence of the gift of spiritual understanding, but by the different fields in which it is exercised, the different subjects through which its penetrativeness is discerned. Some saints are privileged to enjoy exalted contemplations of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation—unmixed God-love, as it were. Others have a vocation to excel in manifestations of neighbor-love, through practical achievements, showing socially on a large scale, as in the career of St. Vincent de Paul—but such apostolic neighbor-love is a living branch of interior God-love, first infused, and then kept alive and fructifying, without ever abating, by the heavenly Father who sees, nurtures, and rewards all in secret.

QUESTION NINE

The Gift of Knowledge

Introduction

In the scheme of St. Thomas, knowledge, the infused gift of the Holy Ghost, is treated in its correspondence with faith, after the gift of spiritual understanding. Like the other intellectual gifts, it functions as a directive for the three gifts that are anchored in the will; namely, piety, fortitude, and God-fearingness. Our inquiries fall under four heads.

1. Is knowledge a gift of the Holy Ghost? 2. Has it anything to do with divine things? Does it deal with created things? 3. As a gift, is it speculative or practical? 4. To which one of the beatitudes is it related?

Article 1

Is Knowledge a Gift of the Holy Ghost?

Statement of the question. An affirmative answer is imposed by Holy Scripture. Knowledge is one of the seven "spirits" enumerated in the classic summary of Isaias (cf. Is. 11:2). The "spirits" are gifts. Other passages take this doctrine for granted. Examples are: Lord, "teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge" (Ps. 118:66); "The Most high gives knowledge to men" (Eccl. 38:6); Wisdom "conducted the just man through right ways and gave him the knowledge of holy things" (Wis. 10:10); "In all things you are made rich in him (Christ Jesus), in all utterance and in all knowledge" (1 Cor. 1:5).

Conclusion of Aquinas. Knowledge is a gift of the Holy Ghost which takes the form of right judgment in things that are to be believed, never confusing them with what ought not to be believed, once the Church has committed itself in deciding which is which.

Proof. The classification of knowledge with the other gifts by Isaias (cf. Is. 11:2) expresses the rank we are defending. But knowledge is thus classified for a particular reason. It differs from the gift of understanding with its two operations of apprehension and penetration, by the formal discernment, through right judgment, of true things as distinct from false. Therefore, it is a gift by itself.

Not all grasp the difference between simple apprehension and judgment. In angels the two are one; but in men, they are distinct. Man's handicap consists in the need of abstraction, before an act of simple intellectual apprehension is possible. Abstraction presupposes the perception of a variety of aspects in the object under consideration. A decision must intervene: Are the phases thus perceived to be united, or must they be kept apart? The process of uniting is called composition; its opposite is division. To compose, the intellect originates an affirmative judgment; to divide, its judgment becomes negative. It happens very often that students find it easy to learn the different theses through which a definite doctrine is expounded. But let them be examined on a synthesis, and their judgment is not trustworthy. It is so easy for them to mistake a particular truth for a principle. Thereupon the balance of the synthesis is lost; its content is spoiled.

The difficulty in judging rightly is particularly apparent when in-

sight is required into the spirit of any doctrine or person. Take whatever doctrine or whatever person you please, the presence of something true and something false can never escape discreet notice. Responsibility is to be exercised in the judgment that ensues. Is the concept which one is analyzing simply true, though false in some detail; or is it simply false with its true element passing only as a detail? Hegel wishes to dispatch the matter by saying: "Neither." He upholds relativism in his universal solution. Every concept is for Hegel an indifferent mixture of part-true and part-false. With such a theory, there can be no survival of anything akin to absolute truth or absolute falsity. Ollé-Laprune was wont to say: "In every doctrine it is the 'soul' or spirit of truth" that one must make for. But in the case of absolutely erroneous teaching, it must then follow that truth, as truth, instead of being "the soul" of the doctrine it becomes its slave. Sound judgment, in many a circumstance, is no child's play. It requires the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the alleged humility of pious souls may be wrongly put down indifferently, as true or false. Proud characters may be adjudged magnanimous and vice versa.

Scientific masterfulness in philosophy equips one for ruling out sophisms in constructing sound arguments based on fixed principles. Similarly, from a much higher level, does the gift of spiritual knowledge aid in rationally threshing out the motives or credibility and the interpretation of the Church's meaning in propounding dogmas.

The gift of knowledge differs from human science in a way of its own. It is not discursive; it is direct and simple, being by origin a participation of knowledge that is divine. It is free from—it breaks loose from—the meshes of ratiocination or rationalizing verbiage. It judges: This new theory smacks of Pelagianism; that leaning is toward Jansenism. The gift of knowledge is not to be confused with acquired theology or the competence of men, however degreed, whose spirit of sufficiency may totally ignore it, whose keenness of intellect disdains its appeal, in favor of their own acknowledged controversial or rationalizing powers. Acquired theology is a thoroughly discursive science—not so the infused gift of knowledge. And this gift is, furthermore, not "the apostle's word of knowledge" (1 Cor. 12:8) nor the eloquence of Gospel heralds; for these "manifestations of the Spirit" are only graces called *gratis datae*. They operate in favor of Christ's mystic body first; and like faith itself they need not be lost through mortal sin; whereas all the formally infused gifts of the Holy Ghost are lost through such

sin—the gift of infused knowledge as well as the others. Bañez, however, shows that acquired theology, the seminary brand, may be made encouragingly practical by *gratis datae* graces, for the instruction of others and for the quieting of adversaries by the solution, if not the dissolution, of their pet arguments. We shall go along with St. Thomas by thus dismissing the “word of knowledge” belonging to the graces *gratis datae*. It is irrelevant.

Faith is superior to the gift of knowledge and yet derives additional perfection from it. The same may be said of hope, especially because of the grading it achieves of all created things as “vanity,” including therewith, the instrumental help of creatures. Faith and hope spur us on and lift us up. We believe in God and divine assistance, hoping for divine assistance by hoping in God.

We need dwell no longer on the distinction between understanding and knowledge as gifts that are infused.

Article 2

Are Divine Things Attained or Encompassed by the Gift of Knowledge?

The reason for this inquiry is to accentuate the distinction between the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.

Conclusion. The gift of knowledge is concerned only with things created and human.

Proof. St. Thomas introduces an argument based on St. Augustine’s authority (*Sed contra*). Direct theological proof is in harmony with all the Fathers and is sustained by the Church’s authority. Its procedure is simple: Certainty in judgment about anything is measured above all through and from its causes. Where the highest of all causes enters in, the judgment is one of wisdom. But in the domain of second or intermediate causes, the generical name of knowledge is preserved—just as in the classification of beasts. Brute beasts go by the name of the genus; they are plain animals. Since the gift of knowledge treats the things of faith subordinately to wisdom, according to second or intermediary causes, and since it judges them rightly in this sphere, it, too, is entitled, in spite of its being a generic term, to designate commonly whatever is known or learned of in the domain of subordinate causes.

This reasoning holds by way of parallel. The inspired origin of the usage is enough to justify it. In *Isaias* 11:2, knowledge is a single, separate gift.

In personal self-examen, the gift of knowledge advances help in discerning what should be believed, insofar as the act or habit of believing is a temporal entity in the mind of the believer. Cajetan specifies that the gift operates in judging, not only of what needs to be believed, but also in eliminating whatever must not be believed. Consistently, things to be avoided are measured by the gift, according to inferior norms or proximate reasons, approaching expediency or in expediency in personal relations with other creatures. "Diplomacy" cannot be justified, to the detriment of the gift. The contrariety buried in a lie is not remedied, therefore, by being labeled an expedient mental reservation.

The gift of knowledge may indirectly transgress the border of created things, but not absolutely. It may judge of divine things through human comparisons with their known effects. The gift of wisdom proceeds in the opposite direction. It judges first of divine things, then of created things as insets in the divine. Herein is explained an outstanding contrast between the Gospels of St. Matthew and of St. John. Both may be rehearsing a preachment of Christ: St. Matthew, presenting phases that show how he himself excels in the gift of knowledge; St. John, portraying in the higher light of wisdom what radiates from above, out through the lower streams of knowledge, with which St. Matthew is more conversant.

Article 3

Is the Gift of Knowledge Practical or Speculative?

Conclusion. The gift of knowledge is first of all and principally speculative. It is practical in a secondary degree.

Proof. The speculative character of the gift of knowledge is established by its exercise of discernment. It tells what one is in duty bound to believe. But faith deals primarily with mysteries; secondarily with precepts. Therefore, the gift of knowledge pertains primarily to speculative truths and thence spreads outward to provide practical direction in the art of right living. This it does in a general way. Once particulars have to be decided upon, the distinct gift of counsel is involved to

regulate piety and other inferior concerns. Such is the knowledge, praised as God's gift to the holy, in the following words of Wisdom: "The Lord led the just man through right ways . . . and bestowed on him the knowledge of saints" (Wis. 10:10). Not one, but all just men have this gift of knowledge conferred upon them, in view of salvation. Through the Church's magistracy, which is always presupposed, they make out or learn whatever duty obliges them to believe, in order to escape wandering away in practice from the path of righteousness.

Article 4

With What Beatitude Is the Gift of Knowledge Aligned?

Conclusion. The gift of knowledge corresponds to the beatitude of compunction: "Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted" (Mt. 5:5).

Proof from tradition. The authority of St. Augustine, commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, affords firm footing. In Chapter 4 he states: "Knowledge is fittingly apportioned to them who mourn. They have learned to what evils they themselves succumbed, by the fact of their pursuit of evil things as if they were good."

Theological Proof. In the strict sense, it is knowledge that enables one to judge creatures correctly. Not any creature, nor all creatures put together, will suffice to build up a perfect good and attain to an ultimate end. It is the greatest of evils, therefore, to turn away from God and love creatures as though there were nothing better. The gift of knowledge, as an endowment breathed into souls by the special action of the Holy Ghost, escapes these two extremes. It beholds the vanity of the creature experimentally, by comparison, if not by contrast, with the greatest Good. It discerns the grievousness of mortal sin; for no second cause is reducible to the First Cause by reason of what it lacks; nor, *a fortiori*, by what makes it a sin. The gift of knowledge sharpens the conviction that creature is creature and God is God without either one being the other. This is an experimental conviction admitting no error about the creature's inability to be the first principle of its own good action, or to originate the factor that makes grace efficacious.

Compunction or the sorrow of contrition is the beatitude that matches the gift of knowledge.

Corollary. Great contrition and its floods of tears are channeled into

the soul through the gift of knowledge. In moments of conversion there can be a stirring in the soul's depths through knowledge. It leads to a turning of the back toward the world and its vanities in order to face God the more easily. What the soul experiences through insights resulting from knowledge may in passing moments be more beneficial spiritually than long years of abstract meditation. Minds thus supernaturally enlightened see eye to eye with the Preacher: "Emptiness upon emptiness . . . all things are emptiness and affliction of spirit" (Eccl. 1:2, 14). Vain solicitudes multiply in the pursuit of honors, and even when the quest is successful, to what do the achieved honors amount? Throughout the *Imitation of Christ*, its author alternates his reflections by passing from holy sadness growing out of human misery, to the joy that springs forth from considering the goodness of God. The sadness is far removed from pessimism. It furnishes a wholesome contribution to intimate goodness. It is a vitalizing element in the first fervor that stimulates new religious and new seminarians; as well as a stimulus in the return to fervor on the part of those who temporarily float into ways of tepidity.

Creatures never excite spiritual joy without being referred beforehand to some divine good as an end. The reason for this is that divine good alone is the ground of all spiritual action and the joy inherent therein. Hence, joy runs back lineally to the gift of wisdom; but not sorrow or mourning.

The Three Degrees of Knowledge

They are correlated with the three degrees of charity so well presented by Dionysius the Carthusian.¹ The first degree bends its receiver toward the strict binding force of precepts. The second degree holds him open to counsel and counsels. The third degree nerves him for heroic performances.

First Degree: The gift of the Holy Ghost is knowledge with a universal sweep. It shows the defectibleness and vainness of all things created when left to themselves, as bolstering the warning that they can be only means to an end. They are not to be loved as if any of them could be lawfully reposed in as an ultimate end. This first degree of knowledge is a minimum requirement for salvation. It appears at the moment of conversion. It rules during the dark passive night of the senses.

¹ *De Donis*, tr. 3, art. 25.

Second Degree: Spiritual knowledge brings out the symbolism through which created beings make God manifest. It emphasizes that the creature's unreliability unfits it for any but moderate use in the cause of salvation. Thereby, it affords acknowledgment of the threefold spirit of evangelical perfection, which works out through the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Third Degree: The gift of knowledge awakens and develops skill; in studying into the causes of sin; in scrutinizing the reasons of spiritual negligence; in cultivating perfection in a spirit of self-denial. It induces an asceticism that tends toward heroicity in its contempt of all things temporal. It becomes personified in men like St. Francis of Assisi and St. John of the Cross—and to such an extent, that one would think the very concept of creatures is incorrect, if they are considered in any manner that is detached from their relationship with God. It is by this third degree of knowledge that all nature is symbolically envisaged as a mirror of God and the divine mind. Man is the living likeness of God—his image—and every corner of creation is filled with other traces of God's workmanship.

The Canticle of the three youths in Babylon's fiery furnace puts this mystery to music. "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all for ever. . . . Sun and moon, bless the Lord. . . . Stars of heaven, bless the Lord. . . . Fountains, bless the Lord . . . " (Dn. 3: 57, 62, 77, 78).

The experience of St. John of the Cross emblazons this panoramic intuition at a practical focus. He wrote: "From the moment I cease to seek anything through self-interest all things are given to me by God, even though I do not ask for them."² In some such providence, St. Paul described the apostles as "having nothing and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). To conclude: The gift of knowledge manifests the vanity of creatures first—of creatures considered independently of God. Then it mounts to contemplate the beauty of creatures in God's eyes, destined as they are to "show forth God's own glory" (Ps. 18:1).

It is particularly in this third degree that the gift of knowledge disposes the soul for infused contemplation. Contemplation itself proceeds from living and not from lifeless faith, whose luminousness is discerned by the gifts of understanding and wisdom. This has been clearly shown above and will be more amply explained in due course.³

² St. John of the Cross, *Ascension of Carmel*, III, chap. 19.

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 45, a. 6, on the gift of wisdom and its third degree.

QUESTION TEN

Unbelief in General

Introduction

Faith has been treated according to its four causes and the correlative gifts of the Holy Ghost. The present treatise will deal with vices opposed to faith. Our schema follows the divisions of St. Thomas in classifying the vices as opposed (1) to faith itself, (2) to the profession of faith, (3) to the gift of understanding, and (4) to the gift of knowledge. (Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, qq. 10-14.)

1. There are three vices opposed directly to faith itself, namely, unbelief in general, q. 10; heresy, q. 11; and apostasy, q. 12. Apostasy is complete desertion of the faith as a whole. Heresy is partial desertion. Emperor Julian is rightly qualified as "the Apostate." He went beyond all heretics in the completeness of his rebellious unbelief.

2. Blasphemy against God's Holy Spirit (q. 14) is the opposite of confessing the faith. There are theologians who group blasphemy among sins against the virtue of religion. But supernatural faith is much more exalted than religion, for which reason blasphemy is proportionately more iniquitous.

3. Against the gift of understanding intellectual vices take the forms of blindness of mind or dullness of sense (q. 15). These conditions are incompatible with infused contemplation.

4. The gift of knowledge is neutralized through ignorance of spiritual things (cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 76). It may in concrete cases excuse from guilt, but not when it is voluntary and concerns spiritualities which it is incumbent to know. The investigation of sinful ignorance will throw greater light on the gift of knowledge in virtue of the law of contrariety.

The doctrine which Aquinas spreads through twelve articles we divide into three parts, in the matter of unbelief in general.

Part I: The sin of unbelief: 1) Is it a real sin? 2) In what faculty is it committed specifically? 3) Is it the greatest of all sins? 4) Does it result in turning every human deed in the life of unbelievers into a sin? (aa. 1-4.)

Part II: On the different species of unbelief in themselves and compared with each other (aa. 5-6.)

Part III. How to treat with unbelievers: Should controversy be engaged in, with them? (a. 7.) Should they be forced to believe? (a. 8.) Should communication be kept up with them? (a. 9.) Should they be allowed to rule over Christians? (a. 10.) Should the religious rites of infidels be tolerated? (a. 11.) Ought the children of unbelievers to be baptized against the wishes of their parents? (a. 12.)

Article 1

Is Unbelief a Sin?

Statement of the question. On the supposition that it is always involuntary, for the reason that delinquents have had no opportunity to learn of revelation, a negative answer would seem peremptory. If it were a sin it would be grievous and of capital importance; yet, no authorities make place for it among the capital vices.

But the unlimited assumption of involuntariness is without a basis in fact. Our response embraces a fourfold conclusion founded on the following distinctions. Unbelief is either negative or positive. When positive, it is either privative or contrary. Negative unbelief is the mere absence of faith in a soul that has never heard of the faith or has never been sufficiently instructed to have it. If sufficient instruction has been received but not heeded, the absence of faith is said to be positive. Infidelity of this kind can come about in two ways: 1) One can become duly aware of what faith is and what it imposes, and yet refrain from assenting to it. This is privative unbelief. 2) If such a one not only withholds his assent, but embraces and supports positive error in defiance of faith, his unbelief is that of a deliberate opponent. It is said to be contrary.

First conclusion. Unbelief is a sin in the degree in which it is voluntary, either directly or indirectly. Negative unbelief is, by its description, involuntary. Positive unbelief is always voluntary, in either one of the two degrees, privative or contrary. St. Thomas verbally distinguishes unbelief as being negative or involuntary, as against "contrary." But the broad sense in which he uses the word "contrary" amounts to the designation of "positively voluntary." He thus makes room for "privative" unbelief in a way that justifies our next conclusion.

Second conclusion. Positive unbelief, whether privative or contrary, is a sin.

Scriptural Proof. Authority of Our Lord: "He who believes not, shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16); "He who believes in the only-begotten Son of God is not condemned"; but "the unbeliever has already been condemned" (Jn. 3:18). Condemnation is a penalty for sin.

Theological Proof. Vice or sin is the contrary of virtue. For this reason, positive unbelief, whether privative or deliberately contrary, being voluntarily directed against the virtue of faith, which is a requisite for salvation, cannot but be a sin. Worse than that, the positive embrace of unbelief ["I shall not believe"] is a sin against nature. It is ingrained in human nature to be perfected with a mentality that remains open to truth. The disposition involves an interior instinct for truth, without detriment to the preaching of truth exteriorly. Wording the argument otherwise: Unbelief is a sin committed directly against God as author of grace. It is not within the reach of unaided human nature to have supernatural faith of itself. But to repel it, or to disdain it, is indirectly an offense against the natural law that dictates universal obedience to God, no matter what he commands. To press this relationship as it deserves, every sin that is directly opposed to the supernatural order is automatically an offense against the supreme excellence of natural law. It is a demand of the natural law that man individually, and society also, should accept divine revelation once it has been set forth sufficiently. Liberalism and indifferentism are thereby doomed.

Positive unbelief originates in pride. It is the disaster of those who will not bend their minds to carry out or to comply with the rules of faith, or to profit by the intelligence of the Fathers. St. Gregory calls it "vainglory rich in presumptuousness through the fascination for novelties." The position or condition is a vice of many degrees ranging from unmixed pertinacity down to dwindling, colorless mental levity. The crumbling façade is masked with boastful airs of being wedded to scientific progress. Books are decorated with "new opinions," so alleged, but they are baseless. They are presented today and cast aside tomorrow, according as awakening applause and surprising popularity are presumed to be calling for new and enlarged editions thoroughly revised. Certain writers have no qualms in ignoring what ought to be a first principle, namely, to work expressly toward the truth and to stick to it in all circumstances. Their exclusive aim is progress—up or down hill makes no difference. If opinions are new, their patrons are convinced they must be an improvement. Hegelianism reasons that

way. The door is flung wide open for absolute optimism, which is logically inseparable from pantheistic evolutionism.

No wonder that sheer dupes of this progeny conceive the idea of baptizing all systems. Through utter blindness to error as error, they seek to star with Aquinas, who "baptized Aristotelianism," by themselves baptizing positivism, Kantism, and even Hegelianism. No need for them to consider that the principles of Aristotelianism are intrinsically conformable to natural reason; whereas the permanent anchorage of principles based on natural reason directly, with the objective firmness they possess, are degraded to naught by the arbitrary rulings of positivism, Kantism, and Hegelianism. Believe it or not, the proper reply to these fantastic philosophers should be: Nobody can "baptize" the devil; nobody need try to baptize doctrines inspired by him, thereby repudiating truths directly inspired by God.

Positive unbelief receives a death blow from the Council of Trent. Faith is lost through it (cf. Denz. 808). There is no measuring the evils that floated out from it in the contentious errors of the original Protestants (cf. Denz. 837). Unbelief is the only real mortal sin, so they claimed. No other offense can equal it in this regard. And what then? Even though the grievousness of a sin be enormous, it cannot deprive the soul of grace without complete unbelief. Sin, therefore, as you like; only believe more strongly than you sin. Such faith is repulsive unbelief.

Trent did nothing but reinforce the Fourth Council of the Lateran: "The Church universal, the Church of the faithful, is but one. Outside it, absolutely nobody is saved." All official definitions of the Church declaring that an infidel cannot be saved, postulate the sinfulness and guilt of positive unbelief. The same is true of the declarations of the Church censuring indifferentism and liberalism, as in the case of Lamennais. That one may truly belong to the soul of the Church, it is imperative for him to be endowed with supernatural faith in whatever is strictly necessary, as a means of salvation. The very least that will suffice is explicit faith in the two prime credibles: "God is and God rewards" (Heb. 11:6).

Third conclusion. Mere negative unbelief is not a sin; but it is a penalty of sin committed by the first man, parent of the human race. It is unbelief due to the ignorance of men who have never heard of the faith.

Scriptural Proof. The denunciation proclaimed by our Lord in St. John: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin" (Jn. 15:22), St. Augustine thus explains: There is here a question of unbelief on the part of the many Jews who refused to believe in Christ. The principle, as announced, exonerates those who had not heard of him. They would be negative unbelievers. From the dawn of Christianity, therefore, a doctrine of Baius had been robbed of its ground. It was condemned in this form: "Purely negative unbelief, in the lives of those to whom Christ has not been preached, is a sin" (Denz. 1068).

Theological Proof. Negative unbelief is entirely involuntary. Nobody sins by omitting what he cannot do. But they who have never heard anything about the faith or whose instruction in the faith is deficient cannot believe according to the norm preached by St. Paul to the Romans: "How can they believe him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). As a parallel, how can one believe in the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary before it has been explained sufficiently? Our investigation, however, has to do with faith as a formal unit, rather than with particular articles. Unbelief is a cancellation of living concepts. In adults, purely negative unbelief is not possible with regard to the minimum of the two prime credibles that rank from every angle as indispensable objects of belief and means of salvation.

Granting the immunity from guilt that accompanies merely negative unbelief, the stigma of penalty is nevertheless attached to it. It is a penalty of original sin. The sin of the protoparent afflicting the human race was voluntary in the head of the race. Through it there was a privation of grace. Original justice was forfeited, together with faith that had been incorporated into it. In virtue of the racial disaster, the children of Adam are begotten without sanctifying grace and are devoid of infused faith, hope, and charity. All this is summed up by the Council of Trent in the declaration, "By his sinful lapse, Adam lost holiness and justice, both for himself and for us" (Denz. 788). That could not have happened had he not received those endowments for us, as well as for himself. They were not his exclusive personal treasure, but an adornment to be kept rooted in nature itself. If, as all interpreters of Trent admit, its use of the term "justice" has reference to original justice, then the conjoined term of holiness in a united sense, expresses sanctifying grace.

Doubt I. It seems that all unbelief, including the negative brand, is a personal sin for adults. All forms of assistance are available for everybody, when called for as needs, and are a necessity for faith. No better reason need be sought.

Reply. As it stands the alleged reason is misleading. It is true that some time before death adults are offered assistance which is either proximately or remotely sufficient for faith in those few things that have to be believed as indispensable means of salvation. But numerous other things ought to be believed over and above that minimum. Touching these, none but remote helps may often be sufficiently available. Let well-disposed adults profit by them and they will be rewarded with proximate aids such as their salvation may require. Graces are not flung upon one in a pile. This meaning is conveyed by the Council of Trent in the reminder, "God does not command the impossible. An order from God obliges the recipient to do what he can in carrying it out; and after that, to pray for assistance in succeeding with the rest of it" (Denz. 804). There may, in this crisis, be a question of the initial responsible act in the use of reason.¹ That being the case, we agree with Bañez in holding that he who does not turn toward God, once God has become known at least implicitly, commits a sin. But the chances often are that the guilt is one of pride, rather than of unbelief.

In these premises the matter of invincible ignorance, its detection or interpretation, its relative nature and extent, is traced in the declaration of Pope Pius IX against rationalism and indifferentism (cf. Denz. 1647 ff.).

Doubt II. In the article now under discussion, St. Thomas does not seem to admit any longer that explicit faith in Christ is a medial necessity for salvation.

Reply. All that can be gathered from the article itself is this: before and up to the coming of Christ explicit faith in him was not universally required under penalty of sin. Our Lord's reproach is so worded as to have provided benevolently for its absence in particular cases. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin" (Jn. 15:22). By parallel reasoning aside from the article in St. Thomas, it is probable that the same casuistry would suit our day in regions where the Gospel has not been preached.

Fourth conclusion. Negative unbelievers who die in that condition are damned without faith, by reason of other sins which cannot be re-

¹ *Summa theol.*, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6.

mitted without faith. They are not damned, however, because of a sin of unbelief.

The principle applied here is simple: There is no penalty incurred in the absence of an actual sin.²

Query. Is the infidelity of an unbeliever to be excused if, on general principles, he is led to question the divine character of Christianity, and takes to the opinion that its denial is infraprobable, even while he persists in absolute unbelief?

Reply. The answer must be negative. It is based on a decision of Pope Innocent XI in his condemnation of laxism (cf. Denz. 1154). The unbeliever, in those circumstances, must pray and press his inquiries further. Neglecting this, he is guilty of sinning against faith by not employing means necessary to attain to the faith. St. Alphonsus lays this down. In a word, unbelief is a sin in the degree in which it is voluntary, either directly or indirectly, and that can come from negligence in investigating revealed truth. It is as though a man were to say: "It is of no consequence whether God has spoken or not."³

Article 2

Is Unbelief Seated in the Intellect as in Its Subject?

Conclusion. The answer must be affirmative. The intellect is the proximate subject affected by unbelief; yet, it is controlled by the action or inaction of the will.

First Proof. The first proof is taken from common sources. Contraries both belong to the same subject. But faith is located in the intellect as moved by the will. Therefore, the same is true of its contrary, unbelief.

Second Proof. The second proof is taken from special sources. The action of unbelief is divisive: it turns away; it dissents. But this divisive action, like the act of believing which it counters, is ascribed to the intellect under the control of the will. *Ergo.*

The obstructive effect of the will which produces unbelief in the manner described, can be the discreditable outcome of contempt for

² Council of Cologne, cited by Faucher in his edition of the *Summa theol.* (1887).

³ Bañez lists an array of other doubts.

the preaching of faith or the Church's declarations. In these premises, contempt is not an intellectual contrary.

First corollary. We may here summarize what Cajetan advances on the subject of intellectual dissent, which is distinct from prejudice.

Dissent may be either positive or negative. In the matter of unbelief, the positive dissenter is said to feel contrary. His spontaneity wafts him into denying that God was made flesh.

Negative dissenters fall into two classes. They simply do not believe or they doubt. Negative dissenters or unbelievers have no concern for or against the Incarnation. They sidetrack it. Doubters are different. Certain ones look the problem in the face and decide to be neutral. They are perplexed by the evidence as it has reached them. Their doubt is objective. But should they solve it by embracing a suspicion or adopting an opinion, their final view will be arbitrarily variable. It will be *pro* or *con*: "God was made flesh"; "God was not made flesh." There may be fluctuations between these contradictory propositions that lead to alternations. Unbelief cannot thus be steadied.

Every form of dissent is incompatible with faith's firm intellectual assent.

Second corollary. This is also aligned with Cajetan's thinking. Once there has been any voluntary consent to a position of dissent, a sin of unbelief has been committed. More briefly, every deliberate doubt against faith is a sin of unbelief.

Two propositions condemned by Pope Innocent XI reinforce this orthodoxy (cf. Denz. 1170 ff.): 1) "One may at discretion prudently repudiate supernatural assent." 2) "The assent of faith, which is supernatural and useful for salvation, remains sound, in spite of a knowledge of revelation which is only probable and in spite of a personal fear that perhaps God has not spoken." Hence, the imperativeness of the First Vatican Council, voiced in the canon which anathematizes even a hypothetical doubt: "Catholics cannot have a just cause for suspending their assent by calling into doubt the faith they have accepted under the Church's magistracy, while awaiting the complete scientific demonstration of its credibleness and truth as they understand it" (Denz. 1815).

When faith itself is lost through positive infidelity, the sin is that of heresy (which will be treated in Question Eleven). Pagans and Jews are not heretics. Being born without faith is not the same hazard as losing faith after having possessed it. Pagans and Jews antagonize the faith before accepting it. Protestant Christians, corporately so-styled,

once had the true faith, which eventually they threw overboard. That is what has since made them heretics.

Article 3

Is Unbelief the Greatest of Sins?

A statement of St. Augustine occasions this inquiry. The eminent Father paused before judging which is worse, a bad Catholic or a formal heretic who seems to be a paragon of good morality.

First conclusion. With regard to its genus, unbelief is a worse sin than all offenses that can be committed against the moral virtues, namely, against human prudence, justice, religion, fortitude, and temperance. This is the reason: unbelief is directed more than any mere moral disorder against God who is the object of the theological virtues. But apart from this generic malice, and owing to particular definite circumstances, offenses against the moral virtues can be more sinful than unbelief. This is especially true when they are deliberately reflected on as faults and then carried out. Our conclusions, therefore, hold, with the qualification that other considerations remain the same.

Second conclusion. Again, generically speaking, the malice of unbelief does not exceed hatred of God. Hatred of God ranks as the greatest sin against the Holy Ghost. *Per se*, its very inherent nature comports voluntary aversion from God. In all sins there is a turning away from God; but, for the most part, this is done only partially and indirectly, as it were, by participation more or less on the side, perhaps only permissively (cf. q. 34). Letting God be offended by what one does is frailty, which God-haters disdain.

Third conclusion. Intrinsically considered, unbelief is a greater sin than despair. Like hatred of God, unbelief is opposed to God as he is in himself, by its refusal to believe God's truth. Despair is just as truly against God, but not as God is in himself. The despairing soul measures God by the goodness which God shares with us. He is ceasing to hope that he himself will continue to participate in the goodness of God. There is no difficulty in admitting that hope is inferior to faith and not higher than it; this is common doctrine. Nevertheless, for humans as they are, despair is more dangerous than unbelief. When hope is gone

men lapse and gravitate toward whatever is vicious. This dries up wholesome interest and draws them away from honorable labors.

A doubt. With reference to other sins—adultery, for instance—as committed by one of the faithful with an infidel, whose sin is formally worse, that of the believer or that of the unbeliever?

Reply. Emphatically the sin of the believer is worse. He is better trained in the knowledge of truth by virtue of his faith. Worse than that, his life is identified with the sacraments of faith, and because of that relationship his deed delivers a contumelious blow against their sacredness.

Certain sins against nature, such as voluntary pollution or masturbation, sodomy, and bestiality, are branded as offenses of the most grievous kind in the matter of lust. But that does not make them absolutely the worst of all sins in every genus. To single out voluntary pollution or masturbation, adultery is worse because of the sin of injustice that is inseparable from it; and a carnal sacrilege is worse because of the additional malice of irreligion.

Article 4

Are All the Works of Unbelievers Sins?

In the *Summa theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 10, a. 4, Aquinas expounds the traditional response. The doctrine was repudiated by Luther, Calvin, Baius, and Jansenius. In this, our day, the negative reply is *de fide*. It binds in conscience against all the said heretics, thanks to decisions adopted by the Council of Trent.¹

There is no room for controversy about the ability of unbelievers to perform many acts that are good, in their own kind. They may tell the truth, love their children, and excel in many philanthropic ways. But in the absence of grace, no such deeds are meritorious supernaturally, for want of the principle that would ordain them to life eternal. Grace and everlasting life go together. Charity, which is the source of merit, presupposes supernatural faith in the two prime credibles as a minimum. When faith of this stamp is lacking, Holy Church holds out strong against the heretics whom Trent condemned. It maintains that

¹ Sess. 6, can. 7, Denz. 798, 817; against Baius cf. Denz. 1016, 1022, 1035, 1038, 1040, 1068; against the Jansenists cf. Denz. 1297, 1298, 1299.

infidels or unbelievers still remain capable of certain deeds that are and remain good in the order of nature. These deeds are not only good in their kind, they derive additional goodness from their circumstances, and as individual performances they are ethically sound and reliable.

The explanation follows logically from the fact that mortal sin does not effect a total corruption of natural goodness, and the deeds referred to demand nothing beyond natural causality which, in the premises, persists good and intact.

A doubt. Granting that the acts under discussion are upright in having proper immediate objectives, they must be put down as evil because their connection with the ultimate end is intercepted.

Reply. It is just as possible for an unbeliever to multiply natural acts that are good without referring them to purposes growing out of his infidelity, as it is for a person with faith to commit a sin of any kind, mortal or venial, without subordinating his action to the aims of faith.²

Article 5

Is the Sin of Unbelief of One or of Many Kinds?

Pagans, Jews, and heretics uphold respectively different forms of unbelief that are irreconcilable; but among them all, a distinction may be made as to whether they inherited from birth their present condition, or are lapsed Catholics.

Paganism is the condition of those who have never had faith and have never made profession of it. They may be out-and-out atheists, or deists, or Mohammedans.

Jews and heretics may be regarded as having previously accepted Christ, whom they now reject. Jews accepted him as promised and prefigured. Heretics profess him as manifested through truth. Unfortunately, their acceptance of truth is too mutilated for him to be possessed through it. Apostasy and schism are reducible to heresy, although schism is more formally a rending of charity. We shall take up apostasy in Question Twelve, schism in Question Thirty-nine, as a subdivision of our treatment of peace. It is a formal sin against charity.

² Cf. the replies of St. Thomas to objections 2 and 3.

Article 6

Are There Grades of Unbelief?

Statement of the question. Which is the most grievous form of unbelief? To answer involves difficulty. It seems that unbelief, such as ran riot in the polytheism of the gentiles, was a graver disorder than that of the Pelagians, who believed in the existence of one only living God and in the Incarnation or Word-made-flesh. In other words, the Gentiles had wandered farther away from faith. They had ignored far more important necessities than either Jews or heretics. Their backs were turned absolutely against every alignment with true faith. Old and New Testaments—they repudiated both alike. Such a stand creates the impression that the unbelief of Gentiles was most extreme and cannot be surpassed.

However, the inspired norm of St. Peter bids us pause: "It were better not to have known the path of justice than, after having learned of it, to turn back" (2 Pt. 2:21). The Gentiles had never learned historically. They could not turn back.

Our query puts on a formal and a material phase, justifying a double solution.

First conclusion. In the formal sense, and speaking absolutely, the unbelief of heretics is the worst. That of Jews comes next. The unbelief of Gentiles is the least grave.

St. Peter's lament, just cited, is a sufficient key for this threefold grading.

Theological proof may be added, based on the pertinacity with which each grade is infected. The position of heretics is more reflex and specifically voluntary. The more deliberate and voluntary one's attitude grows against the faith, the more grievous is the sin committed. "Kicking against the goad" of faith formerly received is the action of a turncoat. It is much worse than resisting the advances of faith on the part of those who have never been converted. Our Lord's parable of the two sons throws light on this subject (cf. Mt. 21:28-31). Far worse it is, on general principles, to promise and not fulfill, than to fail in fulfilling what never has been promised.

Second conclusion. Considering unbelief in its material structure,

the formal grading is reversed. Gentiles or pagans are more completely immersed in unbelief than Jews; and Jews more completely than heretical Christians, commonly so-styled.

Corollary. Heretics who are fallen-away Catholics, in spite of their retention of more articles of belief, are worse off than prospective converts who as yet cling to far fewer Catholic beliefs, but are tending forward along the right path to embrace all eventually.

Article 7

Should Public Controversies with Unbelievers Be Encouraged?

Yes and no! A warning from the Angelic Doctor must not be ignored. It is possible for a man with faith to sin in three ways when engaging in public discussions with unbelievers: 1) If he disputes as one who doubts the faith. It is never lawful to call the faith into doubt. 2) If the controversy is a source of scandal to weak souls. To forge ahead with like detriment would be to damage faith, not to strengthen or spread it. In a given region, however, there might be a grave public need to confute the errors of heretics with individual risks of this sort. 3) If the Catholic disputant lacks competence rightly to weigh and to appraise the arguments alleged by opponents.

On the other hand, public defense of the faith by competent well-disciplined upholders is lawful and praiseworthy, when they batter down the errors of unbelievers. Indeed, controversy of this kind may become an obligation, lest silence work harm in the souls of the weak. The inspired examples of Sts. Stephen and Paul defeat every effort that can ever be made to asperse this magnanimous procedure (cf. Acts 6, 7, 9, 22, 24, 26).

The caution of St. Thomas backs up the sacred canons (Codex J.C. 1325 §3): "Let Catholics beware of holding public disputations and conferences, especially with non-Catholics, without the permission of the Holy See; or, in the case of an emergency, without permission from the local Ordinary."

Article 8

Should Unbelievers Be Forced into the Faith?

Our capital distinction is apropos here. It depends on whether individual unbelievers have at any time in the past received the faith or not.

First conclusion. Unbelievers who have never had the Christian faith, namely, Gentiles and Jews, are not by any means to be forced into the faith. But they may be restrained by the government, especially in a Catholic state, from interfering with the faith.

Proof from tradition. Authority of the Council of Trent: "The Church does not exercise authority over anybody except its own members who have entered it through the gate of baptism" (Denz. 895). St. Paul goes to the point: "What have I to do in judging outsiders?" (1 Cor. 5:12.) Christ set a permanent example in dispatching his apostles the way he did, when he sent them to preach the faith. They went forth, not as armed soldiers, but as lambs among the wolves. Should any of their listeners side-step the Gospel, they had no command from the Master to force acquiescence. They were rather to depart and shake the dust off their feet (cf. Lk. 10:3, 11). When the sons of Zebedee were impelled to destroy the Samaritans by calling down fire from heaven to consume them, our Lord virtually protected that unbelieving stock in a disciplinary way. He all but nicknamed the zestful disciples, "Sons of Thunder" (Mk. 3:17), and discounted the wisdom of their zeal with the reminder: "You know not of what spirit you are" (Mk. 10:38).

Theological Proof. St. Augustine's dictum is memorable: Believing is an act of the will. Man can do many another thing against his will; but if he believes, it can only be because he wills it.

Our thesis is protected by many declarations of Holy Church deterring anybody from bringing compulsion to bear on unbelievers. It is prohibited to employ such a method in making converts.

Historically, Constantine has been praised for his destruction of temples reared to idols. The traditional encomiums are just. Idolatry was a counterfeit of true religion. Its falsity militated against the law of nature. It was presided over and fostered by different princes in succession, who arrogated to themselves its free and absolute guardianship, control, arbitrary direction, and defense, often in defiance of the

consciences of their subjects. The law of supernatural faith is supernatural. It lies above and beyond the reach of secular power.

It is all right, however, to repress unbelievers and to keep them from preventing the exercise of faith and its preachment. No quarter need ever to be given to blasphemy, infidel propaganda, or open persecutions. By Christ's personal command, the Church is bound to preach the Gospel in all parts of the world. And as St. Thomas holds, this explains why the faithful followers of Christ on many occasions wage war with infidels. They offset the attacks of unbelievers; for sane reasoning should induce and clearly does incline unbelievers to admit that Christianity's claim to be the true religion is rational and probable.

Second conclusion. There is at least a degree of lawfulness involved in the following treatment of heretics and apostates who have fallen from the faith, after having first embraced it. They can be required and corporally compelled to live up to what they promised.

First Proof. It is a rigorous law, growing out of the rebirth through baptism: "If anybody says that baptized children, when they become of age, are to be interrogated as to whether they ratify the promises made in their name by godparents at the font—with the understanding that, if they choose freely not to ratify them, they should be left to their own discretion—and thereafter they should not be molested with any penalty that would force upon them the Christian manner of life, save by their excommunication from the reception of the Holy Eucharist and other sacraments, until they reverse their decision, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 870).¹

Relative to the temporal penalties which former juridical custom in Church processes entrusted to the secular power for execution, after their approval as fitting for heretics—they are one and all covered in the contemporary *Code of Canon Law*. Canon 6, n. 5, reads: "All canonical penalties of whatever nature that were imposed by ancient law, if passed over without mention in this prevailing Codex, have been abrogated." The spiritual penalty of excommunication receives express mention in canons 2314, 2315, 2316, 2372. Those who are especially interested are referred to our future inquiry as to the toleration of heretics (cf. below, q. 11, a. 3).

Second Proof. A historical event in the life of St. Augustine bears out the practical importance of the principle governing rightly regu-

¹ This anathema was taken over in substance by the Council of Trent, sess. 7, can. 14, from the Council of Toledo (7th century).

lated public controversy. Augustine himself is the enlightened witness; "At first I held the opinion that unity of faith was so sacred that nobody should be forced into it, nor disturbed by oratory about it, nor fought with disputatiously. But that opinion of mine has been overriden, I will not say by contradicting tongues, but by the public demonstrations of opponents. The foremost signal illustration happened in my own city. The town was filled with Donatists at the time; but subsequently it was converted to Catholicism as a unit, out of fear caused by the imperial laws" (*Epistle 48*).

Augustine's eyes were further opened, as he shows in *Epistle 185*: "Not one of us wishes the perdition of any heretic. But we have something to learn on the subject from the historical crisis of peace in the house of David. If David's son, Absalom, had not been wiped out in the war he instigated against his father, there is no telling the disorders that would have ensued. So, in the Catholic Church, when certain members are lost to it, others are gathered in and the sorrow that has smitten our Mother's heart is soothed by the deliverance of so many peoples unto salvation."

Theological Proof. Subordinates may be compelled by their masters to carry out their obligations. But all those who have accepted the faith and have been baptized have been incorporated into the Church as its members, and have pledged themselves to keep the faith. Therefore, they may be compelled by their superiors to fulfill that obligation; and if they fail therein, they may be held liable to penalties, spiritual and even corporal, the latter having to be administered by the civil courts, under the Church's direction.²

Canon Law today imposes automatic excommunication on all apostates from Christian faith, on heretics and schismatics, one and all. Whoever append their signatures to the teachings of a non-Catholic sect or publicly adhere to one, by so doing incur the stigma of infamy, by decision of the Church. Clerics, over and above, even after having been deposed from all offices, *ipso facto*, for a public defection from the faith (cf. can. 188, n. 4) should be admonished of further peril if they persist. Clerics who disregard the admonition incur degradation from their state. A person who is suspected of heresy is bound to remove the cause of the suspicion. If, once warned, he neglects this duty, he may be forthwith prohibited the exercise of certain official ministra-

² Cf. below, q. 11, a. 3; Codex, can. 2314, par. 1, nn. 1-3; canons 2315-2316, 2372.

tions. Let the warnings be repeated: if they continue without effect, the cleric may be totally suspended from divine functions.

A doubt. The reason alleged for not forcing unbelievers, who have never had the faith, to accept it against their will, amounts to a defense of free will, since there is no believing without willing it. But the same reason should militate for heretics. They, too, have free will and its use should not be interfered with.

Reply. The two cases are not parallel. St. Thomas illustrates their difference. He says: "To bind oneself by vow is an act of free will; but to keep faithful to the vow is an obligation."

Similarly, to assent to the faith is a free act; but once a convert has assented, there ensues a condition of necessity to abide by the faith that has been accepted.

Theoretically, this sound doctrine would be in order under any Catholic government. Its reasonableness is obvious. In practice, however, its application induces effects that often show the remedy to be worse than the disease. The lesser of two evils is what public authority has at times to be content with, when constraints would frustrate a preference for what is good, better, or best. The issue could arise only over those heretics who had personally accepted the faith, at least by the reception of baptism in infancy. Their offspring would not be in the same class. After the second or third generation, the children of heretics often float into unbelief, which leaves them no different from others who have never had faith.

Article 9

Is It Lawful to Communicate with Unbelievers?

St. Thomas explains: it could be unlawful for either one of two reasons or for both. Communication with unbelievers is prohibited as a penalty for unbelief or as a precaution in safeguarding the faith in those who have it.

First conclusion. The Church inflicts the penalty of excommunication on heretics and apostates; not, however, on unbelievers who have never had the faith and are not under the Church's jurisdiction.

The penalty is proportionate to the offense for our time, and is therefore preserved in the contemporary *Pian Codex*.

Second conclusion. As a precautionary measure, for the preservation

of the faith in those who have it, the ordinary faithful or those whose faith is weak should be protected against freely communicating with unbelievers. The case is different with learned men or those who are strongly rooted in the faith. It might be expedient for such to associate commonly with pagans and Jews in order to forward the work of their conversion, at least negatively, by the softening of prejudice.

The need of discretion is deducible from canon 1258: "It is not lawful for the faithful to suit themselves by actively assisting at or taking part in the religious rites of non-Catholics." There are cases in which a passive or merely material presence can be tolerated; but there must be no danger of perversion or scandal. Catholic officials of the civil government, or others, from whom honorable courtesies may be justly expected, may lawfully assist at funerals, marriages, or kindred solemnities affecting non-Catholics, provided there is a grave reason for doing so. If a doubt were to arise about the sufficiency of the reason, the bishop should have the decisive last word.

A very severe sentence is launched against an excommunicated person who is ordered to be shunned: canon 2267 forbids communication with him, even in worldly concerns, in default of a proportionately reasonable cause. Detailed descriptions of the processes imposed by excommunications, are furnished in canons 2257 and the following.

What we have previously rehearsed as doctrine, on the subject of loyalty to the faith and Church unity, has been put into legal form in canons 2314 and the following. All apostates from the Christian faith, together with one and all heretics and schismatics who fall away, incur excommunication by their very defection. If, moreover, they have registered or publicly conducted themselves as active members of a non-Catholic cult, they are marked with canonical infamy. Clerics who lapse into such a condition should be warned to rise. Their failure to comply would justify their forced degradation from the clerical state. Even a suspicion of heresy is legislated against in these canons.

Article 10

May Unbelievers Occupy Prelacies or Have Dominion Over the Faithful?

Statement of the question. In this question, prelacy and dominion must be taken as virtually synonymous. Caesar himself is specified by St. Thomas as holding a prelacy. The distinction invited by the query is between the act of institution or the acquisition of dominion as against the retention of a prelacy already acquired.

First conclusion. The institution and occupancy of a new office over the faithful by an unbeliever cannot in any way be permitted. It could not result in anything but scandal and peril for the faith. It was to avert danger of the sort that led St. Paul to denounce appeals on the part of the faithful to heathen judges and to forbid them (cf. 1 Cor. 6:1).

Second conclusion. If by human or civil law and right, jurisdiction has already been established, such government is not banished by conversion to the faith of particular citizens; nor by the arrival of new inhabitants in the region, who bring the faith with them. The supremacy of Caesar antedated the distinction between believers and unbelievers in the empire. The divine law originating this distinction did not abrogate the human law based on natural reason. The content of a contrary proposition, sustained by Wycliffe, was condemned: "No civil official possesses authority, no prelate has valid jurisdiction, while in the state of mortal sin" (Denz. 595).

Third conclusion. The right and authority of unbelieving rulers over the faithful can, in emergencies, be taken away by a declaration of the Church, fulminated in God's name. The authority of God is exercised by the Church in behalf of the faithful on the said occasions. Unbelieving administrators deserve to forfeit the power with which they are endowed over the faithful. More than once has the Church released determinate Christian peoples from their oath of loyalty toward a heretical emperor or an excommunicated schismatic.

Fourth conclusion. Holy Church has the power to deprive unbelievers, even though temporally they are not her subjects, of all universal and particular dominion over Christians; but she does not do so lest scandal thereby given should outweigh the good accomplished. In this

she is applying the principle appealed to by our Lord when he told St. Peter of his motive in enacting what appeared to be a miracle, for the routine payment of a synagogue tax: he was averse to causing scandal (cf. Mt. 17:26).

Article 11

Are the Religious Observances of Unbelievers to Be Tolerated in a Catholic State?

"Never, without a serious reason," answers St. Thomas. Considered in themselves, formal religious rites of unbelievers ought not to be tolerated at all; but for the prevention of worse evils, they may be. After the example of the Creator certain evils become permissible because, without them, greater benefits might be frustrated or greater ills ensue. It is never lawful to indulge any moral evil deliberately, in order to produce from it a salutary effect. A good end never justifies the employment of evil means.

"Let no provision be made for prostitutes, and there will follow a widespread infection of lusts from their shameless freedom in everything." That was the stand of St. Augustine on what has been called a "necessary vice." Among the multitudes of humans, the social sin is inevitable. Parallel reasoning shows why, in the past, the Church has tolerated the religious rites of heretics and pagans. Owing to the great number of unbelievers in our day, the same policy of expedience is extended to them. Jews have a peculiar reason in their favor, for the Mosaic cults prefigured the truth of Christianity.

Article 12

May the Children of Jews and Other Unbelievers Be Baptized against Their Parents' Will?

Statement of the question. Scotus and the Scotists held for the affirmative, owing to their erroneous disparagement of natural law. For them, there was no need of admitting a natural law because, if it existed, it could not be distinguished absolutely from positive law. Nearly

all theologians rally to the negative side, thereby agreeing with St. Thomas. Certain exceptional cases are admitted.

Proof from tradition. Even when the Church might have demanded the baptism of Jewish children, as under the Christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, she refrained from doing so. In this connection St. Thomas is clear: "It is better to stand by the authority of the Church, than by that of Augustine, Jerome, or any other doctor, since the teaching of the doctors gets its authority from the Church, not *e converso*." It is a custom of the Church that Catholics vie with one another in perpetuating. A double proof may be added from reason.

Proofs from Reason. 1. It would work injury to the faith to baptize in infancy the children of nonbelievers, who subsequently find it easy to abandon the faith. It goes without saying that the family environment of such children would facilitate perversion and apostasy, and that would be very damaging, both for the faith and the sacraments that invigorate it. Besides, it is bad enough to start life by keeping away from believers, but much worse to accept the faith and then sin by breaking away from it.

2. Natural law requires that a child who has not yet come to the use of moral reasoning should be cared for by its father. It would therefore be a violation of natural justice to withdraw ungrown children from the care of their parents, in order to have them baptized. A related violation of natural justice would be perpetrated by forcing anybody who has the use of reason to be baptized unwillingly.¹ When children become of age, in the use of reason, they may then provide for themselves, as is fitting, in matters concerning the divine and natural laws.

Indeed, parents themselves, either one even without the other, and notwithstanding opposition, can assent to the faith through the use of free will. A conversion of the kind provides one of three cases, that are commonly admitted to justify the baptism of children in the families of unbelievers.²

Case I: It is lawful when a child is so near death that, morally speaking, there is no hope of survival, to administer baptism secretly, leaving the parents unawares. In the premises, there will remain no danger of apostasy; and it will be death, not the minister of the sacrament, that will deprive the parents of their charge. Missionaries in foreign lands [and conscientious nurses in hospitals] profit by this contingency.

Case II: If a child is so effectually separated from its parents that no

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIIa, q. 68, a. 10.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, *loc. cit.*

hope remains of its restoration to their control, baptism may be conferred or procured by responsible parties; for in this case, it is assumed that the parents have forfeited the rights of guardianship, the same as if they were dead.

Case III: If an unbelieving parent is converted to the faith, the conversion authorizes the baptism of the offspring thereupon, even though the unconverted partner to the marriage objects. The definition of this right to baptism with the parent—in virtue of the conversion of either parent—goes back through Pope Gregory IX to the Fourth Council of Toledo (589 A.D.). Justice requires that parents consent (mutually) to the baptism in question, it being a favor to religion and an advantage for the child. The danger of apostasy has ceased, thanks to the responsibility of the converted parent, in the matter of imparting **necessary instruction to the offspring.**

Solution of objections. The contention of Scotus ran this way. "It is better to obey God, who instituted the law of baptism for everybody, than yield to parents who, without cause, stand in the way of having their children baptized." Cajetan and Soto concur in denying the propriety of the comparison. It is not an issue between God as the author of baptism and unwilling parents. The problem affects God's own consistency as the author of nature and the natural law of parental right, and also as the author of grace and the law of baptism.

The way was open for God to institute the law of baptism for all (1), either so as to be binding on all, without interference from natural law; or (2), to be of obligation without detriment to the natural law. In our judgment, the divine institution should not be construed as overriding the natural law in this case, nor as being at variance with it. The two laws are to be conciliated for several reasons:

1. The law of grace is a perfection in the nature which God himself created. Grace perfects—it does not destroy nature.

2. There is no example in Scripture that, taken as a fact, can be cited as derogatory to the natural law.

3. The law of baptism does not interfere with other natural rights; as for instance, by killing a mother who is bound to die anyway, in order to baptize an unborn child in her womb; or by authorizing theft in order to procure baptism for a subject, not one's own; and so on.

4. God did not will, through instituting the law of baptism, to nullify the natural law, in virtue of which adults are left free to dispose of their own acts, to be their own masters, and to do as they please. There

is no provision for forcing baptism on them or through them on others.

5. God's will and the will of Christ are clearly working out in the uninterrupted usage of Holy Church.

By what may be construed as a supplemental climax, in dignifying natural law, St. Thomas was perhaps never clearer than when he affirmed expressly that a father's paternal right over his children is natural law. How opposite is the course pursued by positivists in our day! Parental rights, for them, are purely positive. They are neither more nor less than what social agreements make them. And, of what are social agreements capable? In ancient Rome they gave fathers freedom to exercise the power of life and death over their sons. "Society" normalizing with the same freedom, now as then, limits and revokes what it anciently honored as law, excusing its volubility by the claim that instruction and the education of children pertains directly to the state. So supreme is the state, for positivists, that, in their program of determining what the children of citizens must be taught, the personal views or convictions of parents need not be reckoned with. Parents must teach what the state decides [not barring the wildest and most murderous ideologies and secret conspiracies]. Thus it comes about that incredulous positivism stalks abroad psychically, like an echo or shadow of the theological positivism of Scotus when he was confronted with natural law; only now it works disaster in the opposite direction. These incongruities leave no salutary alternative but to follow and defend paternal law and justice as a necessity imposed by natural law. It is the strong fundamental position of St. Thomas Aquinas.³

Other diverse objections need not be dwelt upon, for they lose their importance once the objectivity of natural law is grasped. They fit better into the treatise on baptism. But even with this fundamental reinforcement, the three extraordinary cases permitting the baptism of the offspring of unbelievers remain unscathed, as described above.

Résumé. The treatment of unbelief in this general way may be boiled down to this. Positive unbelief is a sin, a very grievous sin, but less grievous than hatred of God. It is worse than despair which is against hope; and worse than all sins whatever against the moral virtues. Among the species of unbelief, heresy is the worst; Judaism is next worst. Formally speaking, paganism is imputably the least, and

³ This important side issue, developed in a footnote by the author, does not mar the order of the text in which we give it.

comes last. In the breadth or extent of its disorders it turns down, by turning away from, many more revealed truths than heretics, but without the consciousness which makes for formal responsibility. In a Catholic state, the religious rites of unbelievers ought not, of themselves, to be tolerated; but accidentally, and in order to offset greater evils, they may be permitted.

In current usage, infidels hold a place by themselves, as being unbelievers who are neither heretics nor Jews. The Latin form, *infideles*, may be rendered, as we have translated it in most places, "unbelievers." But contexts show that in all cases the term includes, or may include, "infidels" in the sense of those who do not accept Christianity or the Scriptures. "Infidels" [as thus defined descriptively in Webster's Unabridged], being neither heretics nor Jews, are rated as an inferior, if not a nondescript class of unbelievers. For this reason they go by the name of their genus, instead of acquiring a specific name for themselves. Their sin is that of the Gentiles, much less in gravity than the perverseness of heretics or Jews.

QUESTION ELEVEN

Heresy

Introduction

The four articles of St. Thomas may be partitioned into two pairs: on heresy and heretics, respectively:

Part I: On heresy: Is heresy a form of unbelief? (a. 1.) With what matter does it deal? (a. 2.)

Part II: On heretics: Ought they to be tolerated? (a. 3.) Ought those who repent of heresy be received back as Catholics? (a. 4.)

Article 1

Is Heresy a Species of Unbelief?

This article identifies the particular sin by which faith is lost.

St. Thomas' conclusion. "Heresy is the species of unbelief practised

by those who profess to believe in Christ but who corrupt his teachings." This is a formal definition of heresy, which may be altered in order to set forth more clearly the two factors, its genus and specific differential. Formal heresy is a pertinacious adherence to an error that is manifestly contrary to faith, by one who professes to be true to the faith of Christ. This latter form of the definition is the fruit of a hunt in conceptual terminology. St. Thomas approves of it as good, in the sense of being rightly built up from materials entering into inferior definitions that are only nominal and etymological; therefore, superficial and insufficient. It is a real definition, that is to say, one covering the reality. Its construction grows out of the following steps.

Heresy is a Greek word whose sense is derived from the idea of a choice, man-made and free. He who makes the choice may be as arbitrary as he wishes; but he draws a clear line between doctrines that he upholds, as distinct from others that he repudiates. He professes to be taking a stand, to be aiming at some end. That is his wish and intent. The freedom in his choice affects only means [alleged to be] related to that end.

Heresy thus opens up a special way to unbelief. There are two very devious ways of wrecking pure Christian faith. One way is with the iniquitous intention of embracing unbelief. The way of heresy professes the opposite, but mutilates the truth that should be believed in. Pagans and Jews, in withholding their assent to Christ, are wrongly disposed to reach the goal or end of Christian living. Heretics are not mistaken about the Christian goal which they profess to aim at; but, in suiting themselves as to what they do and do not believe in, their choices and methods are bad. Private judgment and self-will nullify their faith. The erroneousness of heresy develops a peculiar characteristic which isolates it specifically from other forms of unbelief.

The nominal and real definitions of heresy are clarified. The name heresy, as a name, is so confusing by itself that religious fanatics and politicians might be designated by it indifferently. But heresy, the religious aberration, in theory at least, is distinct from politics. A religious sect is not a political party. Allegedly a brotherhood, without being able to identify correctly the heavenly Father or his first-born, the members of a sect cohere by banding themselves together [democratically or otherwise] for the propagation of an exclusive body of opinion.

It may be noted here that, by erring in its choices, rather than in its deliberate intention, heresy is, nevertheless, foredoomed. Its plight is

worse than that of Judaism or paganism. The gravity of its unbelief is settled on the principle that it is a worse catastrophe to break with the true faith, once it has been embraced, than to take a stand against the faith, without having ever accepted it.

In the final analysis the direct cause of heresy is pride bolstered up by desire for some temporal advantage. When within reach, leadership and social pomp are fascinations for enthusiasts; but, as in the fray with Lammenais, utopian illusions can bewitch and fantastic attitudes ensnare, so that the pride engendering them volatilizes through self-will, which frowns down upon and against the Church's judgment as beneath notice and an object of disdain.

Many doubts are circulated about the uncertain issues connected with heresies. Their solution, in every case, invites cautious weighing of the terms employed in common and received definitions. [Consult the lexicographers.] The proper balance in mental attitudes would be achieved, were the students of St. Thomas alert to the fact that the Angelic Doctor offers the real definition, which alone furnishes anchorage—not at the beginning of this treatise [a. 1, "on heresy,"] but at the end [in a. 2]—after having paved the way by searching into the different phases involved in the inquiries which he submits to patient investigation.

Article 2

Is Heresy Strictly Concerned with the Things of Faith?

No doubt about it. St. Augustine, as cited by St. Thomas approvingly, is moved to expose the pertinaciousness of heretics as inseparable from their errors. Implemented with contumacy, heretics excel in resistance. They are not open to correction, so steadfastly do they hold to their pestilence-and-death breeding tenets.

The character of canonical phraseology in our time invites reflection and comparisons that span the separation between the actual writing of St. Thomas in the thirteenth century and the proprieties in demand for our epoch in the nineteenth.

Aquinas' conclusion. Formal heresy, which upholds a corruption of Christian faith, embraces obstinately a false opinion concerning truths that belong to the faith, either directly and principally, like the articles of the Apostles' Creed, or indirectly and secondarily, like revealed veri-

ties of less importance. With regard to the first group of truths, there is no difficulty. Persistent opposition to any of the twelve articles specified is opposition to Christian faith itself, the Symbol being an authentic summary of faith's tenets. Such opposition is the sin of heresy. Difficulty arises only from the second member of the conclusion. What did St. Thomas understand by "those things that belong to faith indirectly and secondarily"? If he meant what we first rendered as "indirect and secondary verities" going with the twelve articles, though of less importance, there is still no difficulty. But he could have meant to include theological deductions that follow from a comparison between a direct truth of faith and some natural principle.

Herein is a cause of serious difficulty, at least in our time. The denial of a theological conclusion, owing to its illative origin, cannot be treated as absolute heresy. Contradicting the complex element in a deduction that issues exclusively from a premise of the natural order, may engender an error and be condemned as erroneous, but not as heretical. A great number of theologians agree in holding that a theological deduction of this kind can never be defined as dogma for the simple reason that it is not one hundred per cent revealed.

Contemporary usage has familiarized us with fifteen terms or so that are common in condemnatory procedures. But when the Angelic Doctor was flourishing, the signification of these respective notes or marks, in grading propositions, was not so clearcut as traditional development has since made them. Propositions adverse to faith may now be classified as (1) heretical, (2) bordering on heresy, (3) smacking or suspected of heresy, (4) erroneous, (5) bordering on error, (6) smacking or suspected of error, (7) bad-sounding, (8) captious, (9) temerarious, (10) offensive to pious ears, (11) scandalous, (12) blasphemous, (13) schismatical, (14) seditious, (15) injurious, and so on. These fifteen numbered notes are the common types. Sixty-nine brands of censure could be enumerated as having been used historically. Many of them could be gathered from the forty-five propositions promulgated by the Council of Constance in banning the doctrines of Wycliffe, and also from the list of errors ascribed to Baius, to say nothing of the ordinary verdicts published by the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition (cf. Denz. 581, 1080).

In solving doubts about the mind of St. Thomas, his very words should be adhered to: "Propositions bearing indirectly and secondarily on matters of faith" are indeed verities of faith, but they are of less importance than the authentic articles of the creed. From their denial,

however, follows the corruption of one or more of the received articles, whose content is fixed, even though the enumeration of separate articles is reputed to be either twelve or fourteen.

This solution has firm support from the definition of a heretic in the foregoing article, as one who refuses "to choose whatever Christ has truly taught." Surely, the express teaching of Christ is something more vigorous than mere theological conclusions, even though its details may be of inferior importance, compared with the more majestic and specific contents of precise articles of belief. Our explanation gains direct force from the answer St. Thomas furnishes to the inquiry, whether truths to be believed should be couched in particular articles. The distinction that impressed St. Thomas was based on the difficulty or range of difficulties that separate articles gave rise to in believers.¹ Twelve special difficulties were matched by twelve articles, as Aquinas conceived them. They were difficulties in believing, and that made them quite different from minor categories whose possible difficulties were dispatched automatically for extraneous reasons. These accessory items in Holy Scripture would indeed be entitled to belief, but not as principal truths. They would not be primarily intended. They might be merely covered by a major truth, to say nothing of *obiter dicta*. We believe without misgivings that Abraham had two sons (cf. Gn. 25:1-2); and that a dead person came back to life because touched by the bones of Eliseus. Such truths are not theological conclusions. They are truths of faith "according to the Scriptures," and no denial of them could be perpetrated without falsifying the major article: "I believe in the Holy Ghost who has spoken through the prophets."

St. Thomas confirms this solution of the doubt advanced, by saying: "The object of faith, secondarily and *per accidens*, extends to all things that are divinely communicated through the content of Holy Scripture. Truths of minor importance are thus provided for; such as "Abraham had two sons" (Gal. 4:22); "David was the son of Isai" (1 Par. 12:18), and the like."² Indirectly," Aquinas adds, "things belong to faith when the denial of them would lead to a conclusion incompatible with faith and contrary to it." To hold that Samuel was not the son of Elcana is more than a denial of fact. It is a substantial admission that "divine Scripture has herein turned out to be false" (1 Kgs. 1:2). There is no suggestion in the *Summa theologiae* that theological conclusions have

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 6 ad 1.

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5.

any place or force that would change the two elements in this solution.

"Heresy is a weed that sprouts out of inordinate speech." This classic description implies that language is the expression of concepts communicated by corresponding words. But the application is to our point. Distortions of sense in the exposition of Holy Scripture are worse than mere "inordinate speech." They run counter to the precise meaning literally intended by the Holy Ghost. That is enough to make their defense heretical.

If, as St. Augustine assumes, obstinacy is a character of formal heresy, it does not follow that obstinate adherence to an opinion which a believer does not yet perceive to be contrary to any teaching of the Church, has in it the same malice. An opinion never suffices of itself to equal formal heresy. In theological controversies, particular doctors may impress others as withdrawing assent from positions that are intimately connected with faith. But the Church has not yet spoken definitively. Once the authority of the universal Church has committed itself, whoever takes a determined stand against its decision is reputed to be a heretic. The authority of the universal Church resides chiefly in the Sovereign Pontiff. St. Thomas cites the premises of this statement from the embodiment of medieval canon law, the Decretals, and also from a passage of St. Jerome.

He is not a sinful heretic, therefore, who clings to an untrue doctrine, but keeps ready to be corrected by the Church. His disposition is free from pertinacity. Heresy is made up of two factors, one in the intellect, the second in the will. The intellect assents to some error that is manifestly against faith. The will is the seat of a blind attachment to it. The virtue of faith is essentially intellectual, but it presupposes and is controlled by a pious movement in the will. Heresy opposes faith at both focuses.

An observation of St. Thomas fits in here.³ It has the force of a corollary, and possesses the aptness of a key for historians who do not recognize the Church of the primitive Christians as living over in the Church of today. Even in the thirteenth century Aquinas was a witness to differences which were bound to grow with the increasing age of the living Church. "Many things are now taken to be heretical which anciently did not appear so." This is the explanation. The Church's experience has made manifest where they lead to. They have produced pernicious fruits. The development or maturing of dogma, as the

³ Cf. *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 32, a. 4.

Church lives on, is always toward greater explicitness. Peter's barque has grown into a great ship. The ship, like the apostles' nets, needs constant repair. But as it sails the deep, its condition might for a long time be safe. Commercial enterprise, however, requires changing, shifting, and increases in cargo. The vessel sinks to lower depths through gross tonnage the farther it goes. But leaks are noticed in the side of the vessel that did not matter at first, they were so high above the water level! Gradually they have become a danger. They sink nearer the water's edge. Heresy is leakage. It springs from the water without; it damages the whole cargo within.

Doubts. There are enough doubts that might be considered, but two in particular engage us here: 1) Does mental doubting in the matter of faith turn one into a heretic? 2) Does he who takes an immovable stand against a theological conclusion that is certain become guilty of heresy? Just what is the nature of the particular mortal sin that robs the soul of infused grace? This third question will be clarified by a solution of the two numbered doubts.

There is a fixedness in the definition of formal heresy that came forth at the close of a long "hunt." The two doubts submitted impose the propriety of weighing its terms precisely. The definition has been incorporated into Canon Law in canon 1325, n. 2: "If, after the reception of baptism, a candidate retains the name of Christian, and at the same time pertinaciously denies or entertains a doubt about any one of the truths that must be believed with divine and Catholic faith, he is a heretic. If he has completely fallen away, he is an apostate. Should his infidelity be shown by a withdrawal of his allegiance to the Sovereign Pontiff, or by his unwillingness to associate or correspond with those who are subject to the pope, he is a schismatic."

In this definition of a heretic, the Codex bodies forth the common meaning of a formal heretic. "Obstinate error" is the substance of his charge, "but the error must be manifestly against divine faith," and harbored by one "who has made the profession of faith."⁴

1. Error is the genus; the rest of the definition describes the specific differential. Error would consist in a positive assent to what is false or dissent from what is true. It would be an affirmation of something that does not exist, or a denial of something that truly is, or a doubt as to whether it is or not. He who stubbornly entertains a positive doubt

⁴ The authorities involved for this precision are Billuart, *Turrecremata*, *De Ecclesia*; Salmanticenses, *De Fide*, Index; De Groot, *De Ecclesia*, q. 10, a. 5.

about any article of faith, once it has been sufficiently imposed for belief by the Church, errs in so doing. He stands at variance with the formal motive of faith by dissent, disbelief, and rejection.

2. The error under discussion must be contrary to faith, for heresy is a vice opposed to faith. No matter how steadfastly an opponent may be wedded to error in human concerns, no matter how bitterly he may oppose a theological conclusion, his immobility does not make him a heretic.

3. Formal heresy requires that the error be manifest as well as contrary to faith. If one were secretly to embrace a belief that is contrary to the true faith, but without the antagonism being either certain or obvious, he might materially be a heretic, but not a formal one.

A truth is said to belong to the deposit of faith with certitude and evidence only when it has been certainly and evidently revealed by God. God's revelation may have been directly addressed to a prophet, or it may be in Holy Scripture, couched as the Incarnation: "and the Word was made flesh"; or it may be promulgated in the definitions of the Church, like the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. At all events it is believed by all Catholics. In this the opposite error, heresy, differs from the limping error of near-heresy.

It is a questionable definition to say without modification that heresy is any error that is manifestly against Catholic faith, and that a heretic is one who seizes upon it. Billuart and the Salmanticenses hold that, in conscience and before God, given members among the faithful may, though rarely, become heretics without being recognizable to the Church. Just as to individual prophets and apostles, so also to medieval or modern contemporaries, God could make a personal revelation so manifest that it could not be doubted; and yet, the recipient could be left as free as Jonas in his decision to honor or to ignore it. Were he to refuse at anytime to believe it, he would be a real spiritual heretic.

Private Revelations

The question of private revelations cannot be ignored here. Gotti and others hesitate not to impute the guilt of private heresy to anybody who secretly would cast aside a private revelation made to oneself, with sufficient clearness by God. [The identity of God as the speaker is assumed to be undoubted and manifest.] Let us suppose, for instance, that St. Joan of Arc had repudiated the truth about her

mission. Would she not have perpetrated the malice of a heretic in rejecting the authority of God who communicated it to her? On the other hand, the Salmanticenses and an allied group deny the connection between assent to a private revelation and the exercise of apostolic faith. Theoretically, Gotti's reasoning is logical; but practically, these commentators explain that the prophetic light suffices for the insight accompanying private revelations. Prophetic light (*gratia gratis data*) is not to be identified with the permanent habitual light of infused theological faith.⁵ Be this as it may, the spurious rejection of a revealed truth—classifiable as a private revelation—by a chosen recipient, or the denial that it had been received, would not of themselves turn a sinner into a canonical heretic. There might be serious guilt before God in the premises, but the canonical penalties for heresy would not be incurred.

When it is pointed out that a formal heretic must previously have professed the faith of Christ sincerely, at least by the reception of baptism, it is to single him out as neither a pagan nor a Jew.

Pertinacious adherence to his error is the most distinctive character of a heretic. But what does this mean? The sin of heresy consists in an obstinate upholding of a personal view, recognizable as being against the faith, after the opposite truth or truths of faith have knowingly become sufficiently manifest. Such a position cannot be ascribed to ignorance. It is the product of ill-will.

Obstinacy of the kind is a patent necessity in the genuine heretic: 1) The very name heresy, which signifies an evil choice, demands it. 2) Just as the virtue of faith presupposes a prior motion in the will, inclining the intellect to assent to duly established beliefs, so also the contrary vice of heresy postulates a wicked disposition in the will, originating its pertinacious dissent from truths formally proposed by Holy Church. 3) This ancient concept in the Church is obvious from many passages which St. Thomas cites from St. Augustine in expounding the present thesis. 4) The canonical definition of heresy reinforces the traditional usage presented here.

First corollary. Pertinacity signifies completeness of attachment, not necessarily temporal duration. The attitude can be instantaneous, a sudden seizure of ill-will against the faith after it has been sufficiently propounded by the Church.

Second corollary. Crass and supine ignorance is not to be confounded

⁵ Cf. the author's *Perfection Chrétienne et Contemplation*, II, p. 542.

with pertinaciousness. There may be grievous guilt in nurturing such a disposition, due to ignoring deliberately what one is bound to know; but underneath this professed blackout there can be a conscience ready to listen and be converted, if instruction were available. The spiritual plight may be grossly sinful; but it falls short of the wide-awake obstinacy that makes a heretic.

Third corollary. Affected ignorance does not excuse, in the sense of preventing one from being a formal heretic, if he fights against the faith, or at least if he feigns ignorance in order to usurp greater liberty in acting at variance with the faith, or by showing contempt for the authority of the Church. For such a one to be pertinacious it suffices that he is not mentally disposed to yield to the faith, even though he became aware of the incongruities growing out of his affectation.

Fourth corollary. There is no such thing as being a heretic indirectly—as it were, voluntarily *in causa*. The iniquitous act that makes a heretic is the evil choice to be a heretic, and that choice has direct reference to opposing something known clearly to be binding through faith. In all other sins it is possible to incur their guilt by consenting expressly only to what is otherwise sure to lead to them. Culpable ignorance about the relation between cause and effect might be alleged, but that would not mend matters. He who kills a man is a homicide. He may be out for wild game only; but at the moment of shooting, if the spirit of sport so masters him that the bounding head yonder strikes him as being possibly that of a man, and not a beast, and having taken his aim, he will test his skill by shooting anyway. His “success” as a hunter is suddenly reversed. He shoots. He kills, not a beast but a man. Rue it or not, he has become a homicide. Similarly, in devouring bad books, mortal sins may accumulate: sins of imprudence, disobedience, lust. These are bad enough, but faith is not lost by them immediately. A time may come, however, when faith will vanish through them—and perhaps suddenly.

Fifth corollary. The one thing that suffices for formal heresy is an obstinate denial of any truth which has been infallibly proposed by the Church for belief. It is not necessary that the individual believer realizes that the truth in jeopardy has been revealed. If it were necessary, heretics would become few and scarce, for the rank and file of Christians, generically so styled, are imbued with the superficial holding that the doctrines of their own sect are true and revealed, and whatever other sects maintain to the contrary are not true and not revealed.

That a non-Catholic in this situation fails to acknowledge the infallible authority of the true Church makes no difference. It is enough that the Church has infallible authority and that believers can and ought—they are bound—to be led by it. The persistent course of non-Catholics, however, is one of disdain for the motives of credibility which bring out the objective truth that the Church's authority is itself revealed and evidently believable.

Sixth corollary. Heretical pertinacity is not directed immediately against God's word, or truth in revealing. Its target is the infallibility of the Church's authority. [Holy Church was ever militant for the things of God, its particular mission therein included. Protestants, in militating against the Church, split and resplit indefinitely. They disintegrate; and then, God's rock mountain sheds the sand-heaps that gradually washed away through distant deltas.] Since the Church is one, as commissioned to transmit to posterity the truths God has revealed, it follows that antagonism with the Church in matters of faith turns out virtually and mediately to be a kind of defiance, rightly called *pertinacity*, against Prime Truth revealing.

But what can be going on in a heretic's mind to bring about such a catastrophe? Human hazards usually trace the following path. At first there need be no cause beyond an enthusiastic fascination for a "new idea" that becomes a popular opinion. In due course the opinion proves false. Pride waxes strong. Retraction is refused. Characters like Lamennais and Loisy will not yield to the Church. A theoretical justification of their rebellion, an apparently good pretext, is sought, found, and publicized, on the defects and errancies of churchmen, with the result that limits soon fail to restrain the sufferers. Defections and apostasy round out the total collapse. At times, Christian revelation as a whole is deliberately thrown overboard. [Ronald Knox's presentation of religious "Enthusiasm" records the repetition by centuries of the perennial proofs of this explanation.]

Heresy gets into full swing in the soul when the wavering sinner, in self-defense, begins to ventilate "objective motives" and "not merely subjective" ones; thereby passing ostentatiously from the pride of nursing his own wounds into the pride of a professed heretic willing to lead, if not to organize, one more new heretical following.

First query. Is it enough to deny a theological conclusion in order to become a heretic?

Reply. If of two premises, one is revealed and the other is purely

rational, and if the denial runs back to the revealed premise—which is of faith—and its author perceives the connection, he may be presumed to be heretical; or at least, he lays himself open to a suspicion of heresy. The premise of the rational order is assumed to be evident. Hence, a denial of the conclusion would imply the denial of the accompanying premise belonging to faith.

Second query. Does a doubt in faith make one a heretic?

Reply. Yes, according to canon 1325, n. 2 (cf. Codex). The sense of the canon, however, calls for an explanation. The doubt must be positive, deliberate, and persistent. This happens when one is brought face to face with an article of faith which has been sufficiently expounded or proposed by the Church, and nevertheless clings to his own personal judgment that the truth of it remains doubtful. If, for example, the Holy Eucharist were so disesteemed by one who knows that Christ's presence in the sacrament has been handed down and is believed by the whole Church, the doubter would be a formal heretic. He holds in his mind a positive error to which he is obstinately attached in spite of the Church. The firmness of the dogma he repels, and the infallible prerogative of the Church, mean nothing to him except as irritants toward which he takes an irreconcilable stand. Be definitions what they may, his error amounts to a secret obsession: "Christ is not in the Eucharist!"

It can happen, even after learning clearly what Holy Church proposes for belief, that a person who thinks for himself may conceive a negative doubt relative to this or that particular doctrine, and escape being or becoming a formal heretic. It is the case of one who suspends his judgment while the doubt lasts, without making any final positive decision. Hopefully he will see better later on. He has reasons, for the present, for not precipitating a needless headache, especially by neglecting other obligations; or possibly he is fostering a well-founded desire of greater ease and leisure in due course, to analyze and investigate the motives which should lure him to assent. A doubting Christian on such a threshold has not admitted a matured positive error into his mind. As yet, he is not a real heretic, but he is courting acute danger. It is very easy for a negative doubt to grow into a positive one. Indifferent procrastination is never to be risked deliberately.

Formal error is what we have thus far chosen as our focus. Material error is less culpable, but it too is damaging. It is the plight of a baptized Christian, deceived about some truth of faith through ignorance

and without obstinacy. Psychically, both forms of heresy, formal and material, may be wholly interior, wholly exterior, or mixed:

1. Interior heresy is a voluntary error against faith, but it is secreted in the mind only.

2. Mixed or compound heresy is simultaneously interior and exterior. Conceived in the mind, it is expressed in speech, even though there be no human witness.

3. Heresy that is purely exterior operates through words or deeds; but without shaking the heart loose from its attachment to the faith. If, externally, it is not known about, or known only to a few, as when the partial believer is, so to speak, "lost in a crowd," the infection goes by the name of occult or hidden heresy. But once it becomes commonly known, especially on a large scale, it passes as manifest heresy.

Censures and the Grades of Condemned Propositions

We here submit a clarification of the more important labels in historic usage.⁶

1. Heretical. For a proposition to be heretical it must be directly contrary to a truth of Catholic faith that has been immediately revealed. We here follow the Salmanticenses. The pure sources of revelation, collision with which leads to heresy, are the following:

- a. The manifest character or evidence of the revelation itself as held to by the primitive Christians. Example: The pair of Prime Credibles, "God is, and God rewards."
- b. The inspired and canonical Sacred Scriptures, which contain the written Word of God. [They are listed in Catholic Bibles as 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New, making 73 books in all. (Denz. 84).]
- c. Catholic tradition, theoretically described as the Unwritten Word of God. It is the corps of doctrines and teachings, rooted, but not expressly imbedded in, the inspired Scriptures. It is known and received by the Church as a deposit of truth, developing in its manifestations down the centuries. It was from the beginning entrusted to the Church for transmission to posterity with her own life and power. It comprehends the great body of teaching rooted in the primitive apostolic powers and authority. [Example: transubstantiation.]

⁶ Authorities: Salmanticenses, *De Fide*, disp. 9, dub. 4, par. 2, fol. 277; De Groot *De Ecclesia*, q. 10, a. 5, p. 380; Council of Constance, against Wycliffe, sess. 15, after the fifteen articles against John Hus; also, propositions against Baius (Denz. 1080).

- d. Ecclesiastical definitions. Definitions are the embodiment of particular units of apostolic traditions, sealed as matured beliefs. [Examples: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.]

There may be heretical propositions broadcast by a bedlam of sects against any or all of these sources. We volunteer two comprehensive examples: 1) "The world was created from eternity." This error is a contradiction of the opening declaration of Holy Scripture: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" (Gn. 1:1). 2) "Christ did not descend into hell." The Apostles' Creed says he did.

In heretical aberrations, may allowance be made for a variety of degrees? Reputable doctors are divided. The subject is one of controversy. Matching the grading of sources, there can be a variety in grading the errors against them. This affirmative answer finds favor with Turrecremata, Corduba, Peña, and others. When the error is heretical its grading is all the worse; but a certain proportionateness is carried over into heresies as being distinguished by their opposition to Scripture, or to tradition, or to ecclesiastical definitions.

However, a negation of variety in grading heretical positions is preferred by the Salmanticenses and Suárez, not absolutely, but as being more probable. The aforesaid differences impress them as being only of material import. The simple indivisible formal motive of faith has been abandoned in every case. Common shipwreck has ensued for all alike. It is remarkable, however, that certain errors can be so manifestly heretical as to challenge extenuation and palliation, wherefore ecclesiastical usage denominates them as notoriously heretical.

2. Near-heresy. This predicate is applied to a proposition at variance with a doctrine not yet defined, but which, in the judgment of most Catholics, runs a good chance of being defined [some time] because it voices a deep-seated conviction as being of the faith. [Such was the Immaculate Conception, to say nothing of the Assumption, for over a thousand years. The prevalence of such pious belief was potentially universal. Even controversialists, from St. Augustine on, were enamored of the Immaculate Conception, if a sound dogmatic way could be opened up to define the fact. It was conflict with another different dogma already defined, not a revulsion from the mystery itself, that made certain forms of scholastic antagonism "near-heresy."]

3. Savoring of heresy. This is a tremulous predicate. It implies a fear of the poison of heresy being concealed, chocolate-coated, so to speak, in a proposition open to ambiguity. It is from extraneous usage and

effects that the heretical flavor is discerned. The orthodox declaration by St. Paul that "faith justifies" the believer is inspired. But the Lutheran exaggeration that complete justification is effected in God's sight by "faith alone" [the state of grace thereby operating with never a need of contrition], makes the Protestant appeal to faith as "sufficient for justification," smack of an unsavoriness that dictates very cautious handling of the text in St. Paul. It is not the inspired passage that savors of heresy, but constructions deliberately placed upon it by those who err. This gives rise to suspicions of heresy regarding those who commit themselves to propagating the heretical flavor.

4. Suspected of heresy. The foregoing explanation of heretical savor develops logically this epithet for the transgressors.

5. Erroneous. Rigorously speaking, only a theological conclusion can create the kind of opposition so expressed. The truth antagonized or denied is assumed to be mediately revealed, not immediately. The question is one of precision. Whatever is heretical is necessarily erroneous; but a proposition canonically erroneous need not be theologically heretical. The Church is infallible in condemning erroneous propositions pertaining to faith, but her infallibility is not jeopardized by the following analysis. The contradicting propositions resulting from the condemnation are not forthwith imposed upon all believers with the same complete divine force they would have, had they been one hundred per cent directly revealed. For this reason, a theological conclusion cannot be treated indifferently as a dogma. The authority of God revealing touches only one of its factors. The purely rational factor, brought into contact with the divine one, interferes with the classification of the complex product; the theological conclusion passing as a truth simply revealed. It is a truth simply deduced; but deduction is a discovering, not a revealing. The deduction of a theological conclusion is therefore only partially revealed. As philosophers would maintain, it is a thing *non simpliciter revelatum, sed secundum quid*. It is a truth discovered after having been wrapped up in a preamble to faith and brought to light by reasoning with faith. This process entitles it to be honored as virtually revealed. The denial of it, however, is notably different from the *a priori* repudiation of unmixed revelation like the Trinity.

A doubt. Is it possible to lose the infused virtue of faith without committing a formal sin, a mortal sin of infidelity? To say, for instance, "I wish I could believe but it is now impossible." What makes it impos-

sible? Known cases have been traced and professed as follows. Fascination for some famous heretical authority excelling in erudition and intelligence, has proved enticingly seductive; or, by an opposite trend, the patronage of schools controlled by positivists, and frequented over and over again, has facilitated a gradual lapsing, with no disposition left but the deplorable plaint: "Would that I might believe but the day is gone."⁷

Reply. The question bears on the sheer loss of the infused habit of believing. This negative situation is different from the realization of particular difficulties a convert might experience in the acceptance of dogmas that are in collision with definite inbred prejudices. Then, too, the malice of sin referred to must be formal in its kind and degree, not material. Invincible ignorance does not enter into the case.

The common answer is negative. It grows clear when properly analyzed. These are its constituent elements:

1. No Catholic can ever have a just cause for calling the faith into doubt. Granting that his condition is one of invincible ignorance, the procedure would be at least a material sin. The First Vatican Council is explicit: "If anybody says that there is no difference between the condition of the faithful and that of unbelievers who have not yet attained to the only true faith, so that Catholics, when confronted by a just reason, are free to waive the faith which they have embraced under the magistracy of the Church, by suspending their assent to it and calling the faith into doubt until they come into possession of scientific proof of its credibility and truthful content, *anathema sit*" (Denz. 1815). Theologians are unanimous in claiming he who violates this canon, even through inadvertence, cannot escape at least a material sin.

2. Certain Catholics remain invincibly ignorant of particular dogmas and entertain doubts about them without committing a formal sin. In the premises, their condition is owing to insufficient instruction. But it is commonly held that those who live habitually among Christians can never be totally ignorant of what God has revealed. Everybody knows at least the two prime credibles: "God is" and "God rewards."

The upshot of these data is taught commonly by theologians, namely: "Infused faith is not lost without the guilt of a grievous formal sin committed against the faith itself, contracted by withdrawing previous assent to one or more dogmas, actually revealed by God and embodied in the teachings of the Church." Faith is not lost by any or every mortal

⁷ Vacant, *Études sur le Concile du Vatican*, II, p. 173.

sin that offends against charity or hope—nor by the denial of a particular dogma through ignorance, even when vincible—nor by courting occasions that might wind up in heresy eventually, but not right away—reading forbidden books, for instance, without proper authorization or preparation and thereby drifting toward forms of rationalism. Not every mortal sin wrecks faith, even though its malice is flung against faith. This can happen if a mortal sin is perpetrated against the public confession of faith, without breaking with the faith interiorly; or if interiorly, there is a rupture in the virtue of faith, ensuing from a side issue that is only indirectly voluntary. An objective loss of infused faith is brought about only by a persistent unwillingness to accord intellectual assent to a dogma that has been sufficiently proposed for belief.

The Council of Trent is invoked by theologians as a body in support of this decision, thanks to a blanketing canon dealing directly with justification. It runs thus: The state of grace, called “justification, is lost”—and this truth must be unwaveringly “asserted”—“not only through complete infidelity that abandons faith itself, but by any mortal sin whatever, even when faith is not lost.”

Corollary. A practical conclusion is inevitably forced upon us by this common stand. A Catholic child, in virtue of its baptism duly administered, when brought up among unbelievers and heretics, does not part with infused faith by the mere fact that he professes an infidel or heretical sect through ignorance, whether his ignorance is invincible or vincible and voluntary.

Objection I. It is a common opinion that there exist people who are invincibly and involuntarily ignorant of everything going by the name of revealed religion. But a baptized child could be living among such infidels without ever hearing a word about revelation. The case shows the possibility of one of the faithful living among infidels in the state of complete invincible ignorance touching all revealed truths. Coninck seems to say: The circumstances show more than a possibility. It could be a probability.

Reply. Probable or only possible, the rare occurrence would not weaken our thesis. The baptized child, reared in irresponsible ignorance of all revelation, would not for that reason be deprived of the infused habit of faith. His deficiency would not consist in the absence of God's infused gift, but in his not being aware of the possession or knowing how to use it. He would not exercise himself in the performance of an act of faith. But special reasons dissuade us from admitting that the

hypothesis is probable. The habit of faith, infused through baptism into the child in question, connotes with a certain propriety the accompaniment of a right to particular actual graces that would stir him to believe at least the prime credibles: "God is" and "God rewards." The only requisite disposition would be the attainment of the full use of reason. At this instant of growth mortal sin would be possible, but not necessarily through infidelity. The mastering sinful attraction might operate through sensuality or in some other way. A like contingency would not rob the child of God's infused gift—faith—which he would continue to preserve until and if, later on, he would indulge in a mortal sin formally against faith itself; one which would have to be a sin of positive disbelief.

Objection II. What a wonderful thing, that any infused virtue should last for a long time without being exercised at all!

Reply. It happens even among the faithful when subjects are demented. Besides, habit is one thing and act another. Act is an accessory, not a constituent; least of all when the habit is infused. It is by divine mercy that infused faith is preserved within us, just so long as there is not committed the formal mortal sin of disbelief—just so long as the soul does not knowingly withhold its assent from any dogma sufficiently proposed, or entertain a deliberate doubt about such a doctrine with full consent to the doubt.

There is prophetic and Gospel support for this position in the words: "The bruised reed he shall not break: and smoking flax he shall not extinguish" (Is. 42:3; Mt. 12:20). The Council of Trent explains: "Thanks to his grace, God does not abandon those who have been once justified, unless they abandon him first" (Denz. 804). Although the wording of this truth expressly touches the state and loss of sanctifying grace by any sin, nevertheless, it covers also the condition of the faithful who, though in the state of mortal sin, refrain meanwhile from casting the faith aside. Partial abandonment is reciprocal between God and the sinner, midway, so to speak, between union and complete desertion. It is involved in the law of proportion. God's mercy is still in operation and continues until God himself is deliberately and completely shut out as revealer. This can be only through a sin of positive disbelief, an outright repudiation of believing faith as a whole. Formal faith is an indivisible unit. When, in the absence of charity, faith is formless or lifeless, God's mercy remains operative, as sap in the root of a tree that has been

struck by lightning, but not utterly destroyed, nor deprived of the power to grow forth new branches.

Objection III. A common example looms clear. That particular baptized man lost the faith while frequenting certain lectures. He is not conscious of having committed a mortal sin thereby, least of all, the rebellious sin of infidelity. Nobody has confronted him with such an accusation. His genteel admission of possible guilt does not extend beyond a certain imprudence in reading books he ought not to have read and he is sincere in his statement: "I would dearly love to believe but I can do so no longer."

Reply. This dubious and subtle, if not insidious allegation, opens up a twofold possibility. Sincerity as sincerity cannot carry without truth. The truth is this: The student in question has either lost the faith or he has not lost it. Taking the benign interpretation first, let it be supposed that he has not lost it. The infused gift still resides within him; but he has lost the ease a believer should foster by making deliberate acts of faith, through floating carelessly from one act of imprudence to another, thus gradually withdrawing his attention from the faith and deadening his sensibility to it. This could happen, at least theoretically, without any direct and voluntary commission of formal disbelief. But that is all that can be allowed.

If the man has objectively lost the infused virtue of faith, it could only have been through a formal sin, grievous and mortal, committed by a deliberate choice to believe no longer.

The matter of disbelief is heinous in its gravity. The direct settling down in it requires no more advertence than—but it does require as much advertence as—would suffice for any other mortal sin. The concrete case presented might spring up in any superficial zone of conscientiousness, but it would be unsafe *a priori* to solve it without weighing well its twofold implications.

Baptized Christians, not a few, pass in public as no longer believing. They themselves make no secret of their incredulousness. Students may even grow into this state of mind. They stand, self-accused in specific instances, of grievous, knowingly grievous, violations of prudence. They no longer have any personal interest or desire to keep, or get informed about, the faith. They see that such discipline is an obligation quite necessary in the interest of religious truth; but rationalization stops there. They fail to take precautions against losing what faith they have.

They get absorbed in the rationalism of their choice authors until who will say how far may they go? If, in individual cases, it is discovered that at no time did the responsible party yield to a formal mortal sin of disbelief, there can be but one conclusion, and all theologians agree to it: Infused faith has not been withdrawn from the soul. Many non-Catholics as well as seduced Catholic students, in virtue of valid baptism, may in these premises be true exponents of their own sincerity. They really do wish they could believe. But they must not stop there. Genuine sincerity should impel them to pray: "Lord, help my unbelief." The faith they already possess can thus produce normal sparks or flames, and perseverance in praying will develop the ardor for acts and exercise.

There is room for great sympathy toward wayfarers of this sort, because of the huge disproportion that exists between the unexercised faith they received in childhood and their broad scientific or literary skills. The faith that should direct and preside over all other forms of knowledge is fairly suffocated and stifled as a minor concern, relegated to a small corner in a stuffy alcove.

First query. But in the defection described as a positive sin of infidelity, just when does the guilt become grave and formal?

Reply. In every case the believer hypothetically starts out with the infused gift of faith. Disbelief, therefore, imposes a denial of some kind. It must be the denial of a dogma. The dogma has been proposed for belief either sufficiently or insufficiently. This makes an important difference.

If the exposition of the doctrine has not been sufficient, it stands to reason that the uneducated believer is left in invincible ignorance concerning this or that definition publicized by the Church. In this circumstance there has not been any formal sin committed against the faith.

But granting the combined sufficiency of training and promulgation, either one of two attitudes may ensue: the faith could be thrown overboard wholesale by a flat denial; or there could be just as real a denial interiorly, palliated in its expression by polished dallying or doubt. In the first instance, a negation could be professed once and for all regarding a particular truth of faith, without any loss of a clear insight into the historical or other motives for believing it. This would be a very rare occurrence, but the moment of negation would be the moment of a formal and sinful break with the faith.

In the second instance, the negation or obstinate doubtfulness results

allegedly from a failure to see or to understand the motives justifying the incorporation of this particular dogma in the deposit of faith. A sin of infidelity like this, persisted in with full consent, has its substance in departing from the Church's authority. This cannot be done without parting simultaneously with the light of faith whose shining imparts their full meaning to the motives of credibility. Listening to temptation at this juncture is, there and then, to commit the sin of disbelief. The bastions at stake are none other than the motives on which the infallible authority of the Church has been divinely established. Even the general infallibility of the Church is side-stepped. Unbelief ensues as the result of a positive plunge. Perversion is complete: "I can no longer believe what I know the Catholic Church teaches on this point."⁸

Second query. Would it be possible for an uneducated Catholic reared among adversaries of the faith to get into the frame of mind ascribed to the unwary university student, and turn Protestant because of his apparent unbelieving, without forfeiting the infused virtue of faith, and without yielding to any grave sin of imprudence, even indirectly, against faith? Would it furthermore be possible for him to believe he acts conscientiously in leaving the Catholic Church in order to embrace heresy consistently?⁹

Reply. A good number of theologians hold that the case as presented would be impossible. But there are exceptions, and some allow for its possibility accidentally. Tanner and Platel may be singled out as whitening the circumstances down to these. Suppose that an unenlightened Catholic fell into the hands of a highly credited and intelligent savant who seduced him. His error would be both invincible and involuntary.

The First Vatican Council is cited by Vacant as delivering a warning that the discussion of the untutored Catholic's plight could be very dangerous, and therefore it ought to proceed with great caution, even though it has no close resemblance to heresy—nor much less any connection with heresy—as the direct object of the Council's investigation.

There is a body of opinion among theologians that rings with greater certainty, in face of a statement of the Council to the following effect. In the aforesaid case of a fallen away Catholic who has embraced an heretical sect, there was at least a formal sin of imprudence that weighed indirectly against faith. But the sin committed did not destroy the virtue of faith.

⁸ The materials in this paragraph are tabulated by the author in the original text.

⁹ Cf. Vacant, *Etudes sur le Concile du Vatican*, II, p. 178.

The pause which is counseled before risking a final definitive solution, is due to the lack of completeness in the evidence made available just as soon as a concrete example arises. Jeremias tells why: "The heart is perverse . . . and unsearchable. Who can know it?" (Jer. 19:9.) The Psalmist explains that God alone is the searcher of hearts and reins (cf. Ps. 7:10).

Third query. Is it possible for a Catholic who has once received sufficient express training, and who has actually believed a particular dogma, such as the Immaculate Conception, to be thereafter indoctrinated by a Protestant so effectually as to deny the defined dogma? Could this be without thereby falling into a formal mortal sin of disbelief [which would be a sin of unbelief in the rigorous sense] on the one hand, and yet escaping with no graver conscious guilt than a sin of imprudence, inasmuch as he took it upon himself to risk in advance what he knew he should shun as a perilous discussion?

Reply. Granted that the denial of the dogma in question is explicit—"I no longer believe in it"—or that the doubt is deliberate and indulged in with full consent—"It would be nice to believe if I only could"—granted, also, that the denial or doubt is recognized as contradicting the assent to faith in the Immaculate Conception or any other dogma after sufficient instruction—the delinquent Catholic not only sins indirectly against faith by committing the grievous sin of imprudence, he also offends God by direct opposition to the faith, if not by an equivalent attack, by withdrawing his allegiance to the Church in not accepting a truth which she officially proposes. At the same time, he is pulling himself loose interiorly from the influx of the infused virtue of faith; and this is the determinant of his previously enlightened attachment to the motives of credibility. The case is covered by condemned propositions. One error banned had taken this shape: "It is not within the range of one's will power, to assent to the faith with greater firmness than would be justified by the weight of the accumulated reasons impelling one to believe" (Denz. 1169). A second error took the form of a reasoned conclusion: "Hence, prudence might dictate the repudiation of supernatural assent" (Denz. 1170) that had previously been accorded.

This last query is altogether different from the first and second. It deals with a deliberate pervert who had been duly and profitably taught and disciplined in an intelligent manner. The first and second queries dealt with individuals who slid down into unbelief more or less unawares. They lapsed. The pervert reacts. Equivalently, he attacks. The

former were not expressly nor sufficiently instructed, at least in the particular doctrine, which they gradually doubted, either vincibly or invincibly. The formal sin of unbelief committed by the pervert increases in gravity proportionately to the evidence he had previously accepted concerning the motives of credibility and the deliberateness with which he now turns away from them. His fault can go further and wind up as a sin against the Holy Ghost. In the next article we shall analyze the downward steps chosen and taken by those who deny the faith.

Practical corollary. All confusion must be removed from the terms of this comparison. The condition of faithful among Catholics is poles away from the condition of unbelievers who have never realized the evident motives Catholics have for believing as and what they do. Non-Catholics, therefore, who uphold the divine origin of Christianity, at least as a probability, do not rank on a par with Catholics; but they should pray and seek the truth which they do not as yet believe.

It is quite an opposite situation for a Catholic with the faith to be tempted against the faith. He too must pray. Like a prospective convert, he too should study. But above all and without interruption he should persist in believing. He has been faced by the evident credibility of divine truths and the fact of God's revelation. Instead of daring to doubt or lapsing into doubt, his concern should be to gain greater spiritual vigor, to have his will power improved by the inspiration derived directly from God's Holy Spirit through the infused light of faith. The improvement of sense life, brought under the control and direction of enlightened reason, illustrates in the natural sphere the amelioration effected in the supernatural order, by the subordination of the mind assenting to God revealing whatever belongs to faith.

The repetition of acts of faith, with desires for the ever-growing mastery of the soul by faith, is not only possible for the faithful; it is a prudent supernatural exercise to be commended. Ejaculations stimulate the spirit of it: "Lord, help my unbelief" (Mk. 9:23); "Lord, increase our faith" (Lk. 17:5); "Convert us to thyself, O Lord, and we shall be converted" (Lam. 5:21); "Grant that I may firmly believe in Thee. . . . Lord to whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:69).

Rationalists hold out stoutly against the obligation to believe; but long ago, in connection with the treatises we are summarizing, Cajetan foresaw and solved all their difficulties. Such innovators cannot make those old things new and then carry the day by posing as their authors.

Article 3

Should Heretics Be Tolerated?

Statement of the question. Tolerance for heretics would follow upon the admission of three things: 1) It is within the power of heretics to repent. Intolerance would short-circuit the use of this power in the free humane way which marks sincere conversion. 2) Whatever the Church needs, is entitled to be tolerated. But St. Paul declares to the Corinthians that the Church needs heresies (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19) for the visible sharpening of loyalty that they occasion among the tried and true. 3) This necessity was implicitly emphasized by our Lord when he gave orders, through the parable of the cockle or darnel-weed, to respect his own divine wisdom by focusing attention on the wheat first, and not risking any loss of it, while leaving it to him to terminate, as judge of the world, all further considerateness for the cockle, and to destroy it in his own way, not in a particular historical epoch, but at the end of time (cf. Mt. 13:24-30).

There is room, however, for a "no" as well as a "yes" in weighing the factors of tolerance. *Per se* or absolutely speaking, heretics ought not to be tolerated, for peace, which is a fruit of all the virtues, ought not to be made with heresy. Heresy is a heinous spiritual sin. But when the government of any state is Catholic, tolerance of heresy could easily become a serious issue. *Per accidens*, it might be directly conducive to civic peace. This would not canonize tolerance as a positive benefit, but it could justify it as the lesser of two evils. Aquinas thought this way.

First Proof. This double phase of tolerance, "yes" and "no," moved St. Paul to counsel Titus vigorously: "A man who is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid, knowing that he who is such, is subversive and a sinner" (Ti. 3:10-11). St. Jerome's zeal is transmitted through Aquinas: "Cut away the rotten lumps of flesh; put the scabby sheep out of the flock. Save the household and the house, for heresy is a disease that will slay the whole family." It is because the sin of heresy should be held in abhorrence that the Church's custom is what it is. The penalty of excommunication is meted out to heretics. And doctrinally, when numerous propositions were publicized to denounce the lawfulness of any and all temporal punishments inflicted by the Church on obstinate heretics, the Church fearlessly condemned those propositions.

Witness the obduracy of John Hus who protested that the Church has no right to deliver heretics over to the civil power (cf. Denz. 640). And listen to Luther who censured the burning of heretics (at the stake) as a procedure "against the will of the Holy Ghost" (cf. Denz. 773). How would Luther have fared under the pen of St. Jerome? If he had been driven away by all the faithful in time, would Protestantism have infested Germany and invaded England? The scabby sheep has infected multitudinous flocks. What is it that has survived under the recalcitrant name of Protestantism? The Syllabus of Pius IX lists as number 24 among its propositions the condemnation of the following denial: The Church is not equipped with temporal power or the right "to exercise it either directly or indirectly" (Denz. 1724). The liberals of our time who follow in the footsteps of the Waldensians and Protestants vary this position by holding militantly to the stand that the Church has never been granted coercive power against heretics.

Theological Proof. St. Thomas advances two conclusions, both derived from the content of a *Sed contra*. First conclusion: The malignity of historical heretics is such that they deserved not only to be separated from the Church through excommunication, but to be dispatched from the world through death. Aquinas bolsters up this conviction by reasoning. To corrupt faith which is the life of the soul is by far a more serious offense than to make counterfeit money. The coin at best can procure only a temporal advantage in life. If, therefore, counterfeiters or other malefactors are captured as soon as discovered, by lay princes, and are put to death, in justice—then, for a stronger reason, heretics, immediately on being lawfully condemned, cannot only be excommunicated, they too may be subjected to a death penalty, and with greater justice than counterfeiters. In a word, the heretics in question may be taken over by the civil courts in a Catholic state and executed on the grounds that the Christian principles denied by the guilty are the very foundation of social life; all the more so, if the heretics have denied the existence of God. The living God is the supreme anchorage of morality; the basis of every genuine form of authority. To wreck that absolute truth is to bid adieu to all Christian principles affecting the family, marriage, school, and ultimately Christian government. To laicize the state is, in the long run, to welcome the tyrant where God should reign. [God is no longer trusted, when his existence is systematically ignored.] Society is cancerous. The deadly ill is incurable.

When Christian populations bid adieu to the principles of the

Gospel in legislating for the family, for marriage unity, and indissolubility, for education, for harmony among the classes of society, a kind of liberalism may prevail for a time. But when liberalism fails to take a stand, either for the Gospel or directly against it, it chooses changeable goals of its own that cannot guarantee consistent action or protection. Endless discussion will arise. Congresses will organize the talking that gratifies participants, without getting anywhere progressively, except downhill, in long-range stages. The descent is accomplished toward radicalism by processes of negation and elimination. Resurgence may rally the masses in attractive forms of socialism or democracy, but the Creator is crowded out to make room for the creature's mooted "independence." It is a kind of gravitation or lapsing that quickly gains momentum from real dizzy progress downhill. The product rather than the menace of headless democracy is communism—first materialistic, ultimately, atheistic. The abysmal void, created by the absence of God and God-love, which are elements inseparable from the Gospel's spirit and concepts, eventually yawns for the tyranny of statecraft (and ulterior despotism) through the diffusion of programs for the "superior" independence of the demagogues who popularize it. It is the death knell of freedom and civilization.

By this warning delivered in 1850, Donoso Cortes showed himself an intuitive observer of forces destined since to run riot.¹ He predicted that atheistic communism was bound to carry the day in Russia some time or other; and in the emergency none but the Catholic faith would be powerful enough to restore order to society.

All the chameleon effects of unbelief stand for a tremendous organic sin and rebellion against God. Its graduated stages may be reduced to four heads supplied by St. Thomas. They are found in his treatise on punishment in the *Summa theologiae* (Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1). Each head is a monstrous sin and source of sins by arraigning itself (1) against God as the author of natural law; (2) against spiritual society; (3) against temporal society, whose foundation is wrecked; (4) against reason and conscience. As a sovereign sin with all these complexities, a manysided penalty is due to match it.

Objection. Granting this monstrous heinousness, imprisonment for life might be in order, but not humanly inflicted capital punishment, for "Thou shalt not kill."

¹ This preview is from the author's footnote. Donoso Cortes wrote in 1850, *Oeuvres, Le principe générateur des plus graves erreurs de nos jours* (2nd edition, 1850), II, pp. 211, 230; *Discours sur la situation générale de l'Europe* (1850), I, p. 399.

Reply. In the presence of rebellious factors on so large a scale, with such diversity, the death penalty would be lawful, as already explained. Its aim would be to exemplify justice by stalling the spread of heresy and social disturbance. The general balance, in an execution of this kind, takes it for granted that the death penalty is lawful, being proportionate to the gravity of a crime. In international law, the licitness of the death penalty was always admitted, whenever the common welfare of society made it necessary or the principles of justice, with which the social fabric of society rises and falls, could not be upheld without it.

Second conclusion of St. Thomas: The Church's first concern must be mercy whenever the conversion of the guilty can be furthered by it. Precipitate condemnation is not merciful. Therefore, the verdict is preceded by a first and, if need be, a second correction. It is only when the Church has lost hope for the conversion of a heretic that the more rigorous course is resorted to, and a last effort is made to secure eternal salvation by imposing the remedial penalty of excommunication; and only after that by delivering the obdurate offender to a civil tribunal.

Supplementary objections. 1. The death penalty for heretics is sheer cruelty. It deprives them of their freedom to repent.

Reply. The first and second requisites, being admonitions to amend, are manifestations of meekness and mercy. It is only when they are withstood with obduracy that the offender is declared incorrigible.

2. But whatever contributes to the benefit of Holy Church deserves toleration. It was St. Paul who stated vigorously the "necessity" of heresies.

Reply. The mission of the Church is to save souls. Heresy has no wholesome efficacy to advance it. The benefit accruing to the Church, in St. Paul's perspective, happened in spite of the heretics and against their evil wills. The salvation of souls demands resistance to all ill-will.

3. The Lord of the harvest commands his servants to let the cockle keep on growing.

Reply. This order was a divine warning. It was directed formally toward salvaging all the wheat by restraining fanatical zest. Tolerance for the cockle was prescribed only because and when intolerance would destroy wheat with the cockle. The "Boanerges" spirit would grasp this propriety in due course.

In our day, heretics on a large scale have lapsed into complete unbelief. This situation authorizes *per accidens* the leniency called tolerance, to prevent worse ills than lack of toleration could take away. Unbelief, if negative and unaggressive, is empty. Formal militant heresy

is a contrary, a sub-zero quantity, that is explosive in positive spirals.

St. Thomas who backs up these answers applies principles which he expounds in other treatises. Many things that would carry rationally *per se*, become unpracticable *per accidens*. The evaluation of the death penalty is an illustration.² It is for homicides among other criminals; but it may be inflicted lawfully only by public authority. Indeed, revelation itself was invoked in defense of capital punishment for wizards and other sinners, in the Law of Moses (Exod. 22:18-20). "Should anybody turn out to be a grave danger to the welfare of a community, a spreader of corruption through a particular sin, the common good might make it laudable and salutary to have him put to death" (Ex. 22:18-20). The welfare of the community as a standard moral unity out-balances the right to live on the part of an individual citizen who is conspiring to destroy it. This application of proportionate justice runs parallel with the surgeon's right to amputate a diseased member from the physical organism.

Objection I. Human justice should be patterned after divine justice. But divine justice spares sinners that they may be brought to repent: "I will not the death of the wicked. I desire that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ez. 33:11). This divine wish is frustrated when the life of a sinner is cut short, even when homicides are themselves put to death.

Reply. Aquinas volunteers that divine wisdom sometimes works that way and sometimes the opposite way. For the benefit of good men, God has at times hewn sinners down without warning. Again, he has given them time to repent. In both manners, he provides for the final triumph of his elect. In advancing the cause of his elect, whatever God does is expedient. Human justice is an imitation of divine justice insofar as it is possible. It has recourse to capital punishment for the advantage of those whose right to live and to do good, and the freedom that goes with it, are imperiled on a proportionately large scale by deliberate culprits. When the death penalty is out of proportion with the offense, even though the injuries to others are very grave, the offenders are spared and induced to repent. Through the same hopeful motivation, death penalties may be and have at times been suspended.

Objection II. It is intrinsically a wicked thing to kill a man. Therefore, no good purpose can make it lawful.

Reply. To kill a righteous man who respects his own dignity is intrin-

² Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 64, a. 2.

sically wicked—granted. But to put a flagrant sinner—a murderer—to death, can be an act of virtue, comparable to the slaying of a wild animal. Indeed, a vicious man can be far more pernicious than a beast in the wilds.³

Clerics, however, are barred from killing anybody, even a murderer, by their vocation to the ministry at the altar.⁴ To them is entrusted the ministry of the New Law, in which there is no commission to inflict death or to practice physical mutilation by imposing penalties.

Objection III. Lifelong imprisonment ought to serve as a sufficient (human) punishment for murderers or pernicious heretics.

Reply. The necessity of capital punishment is a thing harder to prove than the utility and lawfulness of legal punishment through death. St. Thomas sustains the lawfulness of it when some serious utility is at stake. The deserved removal of a culprit from among the living would operate on the same principle that justifies a surgeon in cutting away a diseased member from a living organism. The mutilation does not argue a necessity. What invites and justifies it is the usefulness and expediency that will accrue to the survival of the physique as a whole.⁵

Nevertheless, proof is available for capital punishment. For it to be lawful there is no need of seeking mathematical or metaphysical factors. Morals and human usages have their own human methods of proof—physics also. Indeed, the proof of many physical phenomena is their discovery through inductive reasoning. Thus, iron is known by observation to expand through heating; and the most superficial minded are sure that normal men have two eyes and not three. There is nothing in the metaphysical definition of man or matter to guarantee the correctness of these concepts. On the other hand, an analysis of what principles really constitute man leaves no way out, without admitting that man is an entity capable of being moral because he is free in the choice of his acts.

The moral order engenders its own necessity. Ways and means of promoting the common welfare in social matters are most diverse. Certain ones are very far from being absolute necessities. They are obviously advantageous, and that makes them lawful. There can be cases in which particular means may be rigorously indispensable; and still there are various norms for evaluating them. There is the well-balanced judgment of men who, ordinarily, are reputed to be prudent. There are

³ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, I, chap. 7.

⁴ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 64, a. 4.

⁵ Cf. *Summa theol.*, loc. cit.

standards that hold among different peoples, whose singular ways demand sanction for whatever turns out, commonly, most of the time. These average appraisals are lawful measures to go by and in given cases they become compulsory. In this miscellaneousness of standards, the lawfulness of the death penalty may be considered as not being demonstrable, in the strict and rigorous sense of the term. Nevertheless, the morality of it is established with certainty, within fixed limits. There are many similar things that nobody doubts, from the mere failure to assign in their favor a rigorous demonstration. The evident credibility of the mysteries of faith falls into this class, if one considers only the degree of perception which numerous Christians who profess it actually have. Nevertheless, a considerable number of authors stand firmly together in maintaining that the lawfulness of capital punishment for crime is a truth that has been once and for all demonstrated. A similar issue is the right of private ownership of property which St. Thomas handles in the *Summa theologiae* (IIa IIae, q. 66, a. 2 ad 1).

Indifferentism

The doctrine we have been drawing out is reinforced by the Church's declarations touching indifferentism and liberalism as applied to religious cults. The multiplication of cults with sects is an evil, whether liberalists like it or not. Counterfeiting is a vice. And yet the evil, without ceasing to be an evil, must be tolerated at times to prevent worse evils.⁶

The basis of this teaching is the obligation, not of individual men only, but of society as a unit, to accept revelation, once it has been made known sufficiently.⁷ It is wrong and misleading to say: This is a scholastic thesis, to be upheld in sacred theology as speculatively true; but the rule to follow in practice is more like a hypothesis: uphold liberty for all religions, or act as if you do, in order to share in all the advantages that grow out of this policy. This is not enough. The thesis so beclouded is no vain speculative ideal to be sidetracked in practice. It enunciates an end that must be attained and offers no compromise in carrying out what God's rights impose. The true religion must be embraced by all with both arms; that is to say, both socially and in-

⁶ Cf. Encyclicals of Pope Gregory XVI: *Mirari vos* and *Quanta cura* (Denz. 1614, 1642, 1690); *Syllabus* of Pius IX, (Denz. 1778 ff.); Encyclical of Leo XIII, *Libertas*.

⁷ Cf. *De Revelatione*, II, p. 448.

dividually. In bringing this to pass, circumstances have to be considered; especially when contingencies limit the free exercise of prudence to a decision imposing tolerance for the lesser of two evils, in order to escape or offset something worse. But to lock up this thesis with the negligible clutter in a desk drawer, would be equivalent to turning one's back on the solitary ultimate Christian goal that must be reached. The procedure might be labeled opportune and charitable without being either, for the simple reason that it would abandon God by shaking loose from his love and the love of souls. Not with impunity can a doctrinal position involving the most serious of obligations be peddled as empty verbiage or nothing. The popes are all in agreement that a path of this kind leads to indifferentism, which Pope Pius IX described as the "freedom of perdition" (Denz. 1690).⁸

Thesis and Hypothesis

It is a pernicious abuse to robe the factors in this fashionable discussion with the elusive names of thesis and hypothesis, thereby conveying the notion that the mental thesis may be smugly upheld as belonging to the speculative order but devoid of direct bearing on practical life, in which the dominant rule can never be more than hypothetical. This absurdity would, in short order, liquidate Catholic social action. It is pathetically manifest that many Catholics are in complete ignorance of the obligations toward God which society stands under. And they are in error, as often as they join with resurgents against truth itself, in harping upon neutrality of the state, neutrality of the schools, and unbridled liberty of conscience. Rallying of this sort makes straightway for a radicalism that is at once irreligious and atheistic. The preview we have inserted from Donoso Cortes (1850), does not exaggerate by stating: "When liberalism floats freely, being without a compass, it loses its aptitude to actuate and guide. Its trend is one of lapsing into radicalism, socialism, and communism, materialistic and godless."⁹

To correct errors ensuing from the known abuse of the distinction between thesis and hypothesis, a great many theologians agree in substituting for it a less insidious—because true and objective—distinction, between the end and the opportuneness of means here and now applicable or adapted to procure it, according to the dictates of pru-

⁸ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical *Quanta cura*.

⁹ Cf. above, footnote 1.

dence. This alternative safeguards a factor that can never be discarded, namely, the deliberate efficacious aim, resulting from final causality, which dominates the virtue of prudence in choosing the means to attain the end. In this perspective Holy Church is wise. Like personal wisdom, it progresses "strongly and sweetly": "strongly," by not deviating to the right or to the left of its unmistakable target; "sweetly," in the choice of means, methods, and instruments to reach its correct aim.

Herein it is patent that utter agreement is insured between the impregnable character of faith and the benignity required by charity on behalf of the erring. These terminal virtues balance, so to speak; they are not mutually exclusive. They complement each other; rather, they are compenetrative. They cannot be separated without detriment to charity, which would then degenerate into liberalism, and detriment to faith. It could no longer keep aloof from sectarianism. From on high these corresponding virtues, faith and charity, need to be conjoined and intimately bound together. They should melt into each other, through the heat of that love that consumes as "zeal for God's glory" and the salvation of souls. This marvel can occur only in Christ. In his mystic self, "mercy meets truth," and the meeting enlivens proportionately all the members, in the degree of their unitedness with the Head. The mystery of the Mystic Body and the "temples of the Holy Ghost" is one and the same, from the baptismal font. It carries the key of reconciliation between the exigencies of truth and the exigencies of charity in the exercise of true zeal.¹⁰

Article 4

Should Catholics Who Have Been Perverted by Heresy Be Welcomed Back into the Church?

The reason for this inquiry is a citation which St. Thomas makes in the form of a decretal from medieval canon law.¹ It runs as follows: "If converts, after the abjuration of error, are discovered to have fallen back into heresy, thus abjured, they are to be turned over to the civil tribunal." Aquinas indicates a double element involved in this decretal.

¹⁰ We have already published a more thoroughgoing treatment in detail, bearing on the objections of the liberals; cf. *De Revelation*, II, pp. 392, 425.

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 11, a. 4, *Sed Contra*.

1. Holy Church keeps the way of salvation open, by always welcoming back to penance those who so desire, no matter how often they have relapsed. This is an exercise of charity. Charity binds everyone to wish that others be saved.

2. If, however, for the mere asking, without reference to serious penance, heretics were always taken back and their lives were prolonged, together with the retention of other temporal possessions, great damage could ensue for the salvation of their neighbors. Repeated lapses could spread by the contagion of example and deterrent reasons against them would lose force.

The impact of these two elements determined the prescriptions of ancient canons in virtue of which those who relapsed into heresy, which they had formerly abjured, were received back if repentant, without being released from the penalty of death. The false denunciation of St. Joan of Arc as a "relapsed heretic," plus her tortures through burning at the stake, were insidiously framed as a legal procedure, in conformity with canonical orthodoxy.

Canonical Penalties at Present in Force Against Heretics²

Canon 731, n. 2: "It is forbidden to administer the sacraments of the Church to heretics and schismatics, even to those who are in good faith, for the mere asking. Those who ask must first break with their errors and be reconciled with the Church."

Canon 985, n. 1: "Apostates from the faith, heretics, and schismatics incur irregularities *ex delicto*, by the sinfulness of their condition [whether formal or material.]"

Canon 1240: Unless some signs of repentance are known to have preceded death, the following groups are barred from Christian burial: notorious apostates from Christian faith, and all those who have allied themselves as members with any heretical or schismatical sect or with the secret society of the Masons.

Canon 2314: "All apostates from the Christian faith, all heretics and schismatics without exception, incur excommunication *ipso facto*, unless, when admonished officially, they turn back. To persist in their defection after having been warned, would be to forfeit their title to any benefit, dignity . . . or official standing acquired in the Church.

² Cf. index of *The Code of Canon Law* under the headings Index, Heretics, Books.

The note of infamy may be declared as incurred by them. If they are clerics, a second admonition would be in order; but if it failed to reclaim them, they should be deposed. Whoever joins a non-Catholic sect becomes infamous by so doing. If the said perverts are clerics who ignore a special warning—to which they will be entitled—they should be degraded. Absolution from the excommunication cannot be granted, where alone it must be sought, without a special abjuration made before it. Even then there is no valid absolution in conscience, except after the manner of all cases, reserved like it, in a special way, to the Apostolic See. Any cleric suspected of heresy and twice admonished in vain, should be suspended from divine functions.”

Concerning heretical books: Canon 1397: Dangerous books should be reported to the ordinary or to the Apostolic See.

Canon 1396: Whatever books have been condemned by the Apostolic See are forbidden everywhere, no matter what the language into which they have been translated.

Canon 1398: Every lawful prohibition of a book makes it unlawful to have the said book edited, read, kept, sold, translated into a foreign tongue, or passed on to others.

QUESTION TWELVE

Apostasy

Introduction

St. Thomas divides the question into two articles: 1) Does apostasy pertain to unbelief? 2) Does a ruler forfeit dominion over his subjects by becoming an apostate?

Article 1

Is Apostasy a Form of Unbelief?

Since apostasy consists in giving up faith as a whole, it cannot but be a form of unbelief. In this simple withdrawal from the faith, once and for all, apostasy differs from any partial withdrawal or denial, such

as suffices for heresy. The distinction between apostasy and heresy, however, is not an essential one. It is reducible to the mere measurements of more and less, in whole or in part. In the sacred tribunal the sin is unbelief, with apostasy ranking as a more grievous circumstance than heresy.

Minor brands of apostasy are the following: 1) Apostasy from the religious state. This is committed only by those who have made canonical profession and, without legitimate authorization, such as can be granted only by superiors, actually abandon the religious life with their mind made up not to return to it. 2) Apostasy from orders. This is the sin of those who, without seeking a legitimate dispensation from any major holy orders actually received, settle down to live as lay people without further concern for the clerical state.

Departures from religion before taking vows or on the expiration of temporary vows do not constitute apostasy. Neither does the withdrawal of a cleric from minor orders.

Article 2

Does a Ruler Forfeit Dominion Over His Subjects by Becoming an Apostate? Would Apostasy Release His Subjects from Allegiance to Him?

In virtue of a decree of Pope Gregory VII, Aquinas, the Common Doctor, replies affirmatively to both questions. The reasoning involved is this: it is the Church's duty to penalize unbelief among subjects who have received the faith; but apostate princes, if left in power, would encourage their subjects to imitate themselves by separating from the faith. For this reason, the penalty imposed on them is very appropriately a divesting of the power to rule and exercise jurisdiction. "And no time is lost in executing (this decree). The moment a ruler is officially denounced as excommunicated because of apostasy from the faith, his subjects are automatically released from his dominion and from their oath of allegiance to him."

It is pertinent to observe that this immediate loss of authority is not incurred with the guilt of any other sins, apart from apostasy from the faith. This is because apostasy by itself amounts to a total separation from God through will power and mind.

QUESTION THIRTEEN

Blasphemy in General

The character and gravity of blasphemy are treated in four articles.

Article 1

Is Blasphemy Opposed to the Confession of Faith?

Yes; the definition of blasphemy needs but to be explained in proving it. Blasphemy is a contumelious attack, assailing God either secretly in the heart or by vocalized speech. The secret insult from the heart is in line with the mental antagonism or speech of demons, for whom vocalization is not a normal manner of expression. But whether men blaspheme interiorly or orally, their impulse and intent are to be abusive and to inflict injury. This is not the same thing as disbelieving. The attitude does not imply an assent in opposition to faith. The blasphemer's aim is to dishonor God, or the saints, or holy things because of their connection with God. Just as God is truly praised in his saints, blasphemy directed against the saints reaches back through them to God. The following are blasphemous utterances: "God is unjust"; "God has no concern about human affairs"; "Would that God might desist from punishing sins"; "Would that he were not almighty and all-knowing." Blasphemous actions speak louder than words, such as spitting on the crucifix and smashing holy statues. Furthermore, blasphemy can become heretical by denying a truth of faith.

Article 2

Is Blasphemy Always a Mortal Sin?

Generically speaking, blasphemy is a mortal sin. In Leviticus the penalty of death was inflicted because of it: "As for him who blasphemes the name of the Lord, dying let him die. All the multitude shall stone him" (Lv. 24:16).

Theologically, the injuriousness of blasphemy being directed against

God's goodness, is completely repugnant to divine charity. It can never be a venial sin through deficiency in its matter.

But can its malice be reduced for want of sufficient reflection? If, by want of reflection is meant a failure to recognize that such irreverent speech is in reality blasphemy, the guilt contracted may be only venial, not mortal; but if the truth about the utterance is discerned as blasphemy, there can be no other extenuating circumstance. A mortal sin is committed just as actually as murder on the part of a man who slays "because his wrath got the better of him." Precipitateness and impetuosity can spring as effects from intensity aroused by full interior consent. In these particular passions that is what occurs. Sufficient reflection to understand the thing to be said or done arouses a tenseness that deliberately refuses to be allayed, and as a consequence, the vigorousness of passion let loose increases rather than decreases guilt.

A habit of blaspheming cannot be appealed to as excusing from mortal sin. The blasphemer who is negligent and simply does not care incurs the full guilt of blasphemy by yielding to its cause. Yielding to a habit manifested by many acts is a graver situation than consenting to sins freely, one by one, without a habit. And the needful correction is harder.

Article 3

Is Blasphemy the Most Grievous of All Sins?

Yes; to say anything that dishonors God or makes God an object of disdain is an evil that is most grievous. Unbelief opens the way to these excesses; blasphemy expresses them. It antagonizes the disposition to confess the faith. It is engendered by a voluntary detestation such as matures in the hatred of God. It is from every angle impious and irreligious.

Blasphemy is worse than homicide, even though the murderer inflicts more injury upon his victim than blasphemy can inflict on God. And blasphemy is worse than perjury, because of the directness with which it turns against God.

Article 4

Do the Damned Blaspheme?

The condition of the reprobate in hell is necessarily blasphemous. They hold divine justice in detestation. Moreover, it is credible that this interior blaspheming after the final resurrection and general judgment will develop into blasphemous vocalizations to match and to offset the holy symphony of the saints. There is a reason for this possibility. The damned love the sins for which they are being punished and they hate the penalties that are inflicted on them by God. "The pride of those who have hated God is ever on the increase" (Ps. 73:23). It keeps growing or rising with a productivity of evil that never dies down or wears out. The period of merit and demerit is no more. The tyranny of damnation is a fixed state.

QUESTION FOURTEEN

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

Introduction

This is a Scriptural topic inasmuch as the four articles filling out the question have to do with explaining the meaning of what Holy Scripture says on the subject. The articles are: (1) on the nature of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; (2) its species; (3) Is it unforgivable? (4) Is it possible for a man to sin against the Holy Ghost before committing other sins?

Article 1

Is the Sin against the Holy Ghost the Same as the One Classified as "of Certain Malice"?

Statement of the question. Three different conceptions of the sin against the Holy Ghost have been respected by tradition. Since St.

Thomas conciliates them, his position deserves to be presented in their perspective.

1. Sts. Athanasius, Hilary, Jerome, and Chrysostom identify the sin against the Holy Ghost as blasphemy directed specifically against the Holy Spirit of God, either in the sense of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity or covering God's essential Holy Name, as applied to anyone of the **three Persons, or to the whole Trinity**.

2. St. Augustine singles out final impenitence as the sin against the Holy Ghost.

3. The Master of the Sentences speaks of it as the incomparable sin of **sheer malice [or malice aforethought]**.

Aquinas fuses all three explanations into the one form of special sinful malice which is exercised through contempt of grace, precisely because of the influence of grace in drawing its subject away from sin. There can be no hesitancy, therefore, in his answering affirmatively. The biblical "sin against the Holy Ghost" (Mt. 12:31-32) is the same as the "sin of certain malice" [malice prepense or malice aforethought]. One would rather call it black malice; for there is no question here of a mere habitual inclination to act viciously. Contempt is involved, such as shuns the movement of grace away from sin just because it is grace. It is an effect operated by the Holy Ghost that is repelled. By appropriation, goodness is attributed to the Holy Ghost, power to God the Father, and wisdom to God the Son. To sin, therefore, against God's goodness by contemptuously repudiating its direct effect in the form of grace that should hold one back from sinning, is to cross the threshold toward final impenitence (cf. Jn. 8:21-24).

Our Lord himself upheld some kind of cleavage when he distinguished between blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and blasphemy against the Son of man. It was against the visible man Christ that the Jews were uprising when they called him a "glutton, a wine-bibber and a willing associate of publicans" (Mt. 11:10). As far as they could see they were besmirching a human reputation. But their stand became rigidly heinous through blasphemy against the Holy Ghost when they ascribed to Beelzebub, a prince of devils, the works Christ wrought through his own divine power, with the cooperation of God the Holy Ghost. It is this sin of black malice which the Gospel denounces. "Certain malice" [or malice aforethought], so designated in the title, may indeed be only a preliminary disposition to sin, but the blackness of a sin against the Holy Ghost characterizes its full compass. In-between

the predisposition and the black malice of blasphemy, final impenitence may turn any kind of grave sin into one of malice prepense. Hence, concludes Aquinas, a so-called "sin against the Holy Ghost" is always of a special kind, without being exclusively a particular species. In this way St. Thomas balances the accepted interpretations of particular Fathers and Doctors.

Article 2

Are There Different Species of Sins Against the Holy Ghost?

The Master of the Sentences had assigned six species of the sin against the Holy Ghost. The Angelic Doctor shows the suitableness of that division. It was based on a comprehensive grasp of the genus divided, each species fitting into the common *ratio formalis* or characteristic factor of the entire genus.

The distinctive offensiveness ingrained in a sin against the Holy Ghost is contempt for whatever draws one back from sin. Any one of three considerations can be at stake, since the mental deterrents from sinning may be either: (1) God; (2) God's gifts; (3) the nature of sin itself.

1. The thought of God must focus on the attributes of his mercy and justice. Mercy forgives; justice punishes sin. Disdain for God's mercy leads to despair. Contempt of this justice induces arrogant presumption. The presumptuous man looks for glory without merit and pardon without repentance. Despair and presumption are thus sins against the Holy Ghost.

2. God's gifts are mentally reducible to acknowledgment of truth and the help of God's grace. If these gifts are spurned, spiritual truth is impugned as an obstacle to license or freedom in sinning. Moreover, enviousness also is aroused by the spread of brotherhood among Christian spirits and the growth of supernatural influences throughout the world. Anti-Catholic liberalism and Protestantism, in the sense of prejudice and bigotry, are both attitudes facilitating the guilt that goes with sins against the Holy Ghost.

3. The disorders of sin itself are too repugnant not to be withstood. Its shamefulness, when embraced without repentance, leads to final

impenitence. The reduced modicum of good that survives, or is attained through sin by a transgressor, fascinates the delinquent; and out of regard for the satisfaction he falls into a condition of obstinacy. Impenitence and obstinacy are thus other forms of sins against the Holy Ghost.

Article 3

Can the Sin against the Holy Ghost Be Forgiven?

This, too, is an inquiry belonging to Scriptural exegesis, since the article in the *Summa theologiae* (IIa IIae, q. 14, a. 3) amounts to an explanation of our Lord's own words: "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come" (Mt. 12:32). How can this denunciation stand in face of numerous and varied testimonies in the Bible and tradition, the impact of which is this: "As long as life lasts, never despair." It is God who heals all our infirmities. No disease is incurable when the physician is almighty. Wayfarers bound for heaven are not impeccable; but they can repent of every sin as truly as they may fall from every virtue.

The response of Aquinas is based on the character of a sin against the Holy Ghost considered in itself. Being contrary to the very Spirit of holiness, it is irremissible. However, this does not make God unable to forgive it, unless we side with St. Augustine in identifying and combining final impenitence with it. Final impenitence is absolutely unforgivable. It is because many of the Fathers do not expressly accept the identification of St. Augustine, that approved usage applies the name, "sin against the Holy Ghost," not to any particular species of sin exclusively, but to a distinct circumstance such as might characterize any mortal sin in which one persists till death.

Propriety of speech that is descriptive through usage is the only element involved in this discussion. The "sin against the Holy Ghost," because it is "against the Holy Ghost," has a certain blackness, authorizing it to be called unforgivable. In the first place, he who commits it, is slamming or locking a door through which alone the remission of sins must enter. For doing so, there can never be a good excuse. Then, too, the only means that can be resorted to for forgiveness is snapped. Recourse to God's mercy is cut off.

Deathbed or other last-minute or sudden conversions remain possible; but St. Thomas regards them as "*quasi-spiritual miracles*." They are like the unexpected cure of an incurable physical disease. The sin or disease suffices to destroy the natural principle of spiritual or bodily health, taking away one's appetite and robbing the patient of his responsiveness to medication. Nevertheless, it remains always within God's power to cure; and the Creator has never to reckon against odds in any affliction which he determines shall pass.

St. Thomas focuses attention on St. John Chrysostom's view of the absoluteness of Christ's expression. Jesus is denouncing a definitely historical group, who are conspiring against himself. He is operating as one "greater than the prophets." He is functioning as mind reader and heart searcher, for whom the future was an open book. He was prophesying, therefore, about the future of his particular antagonists, who remained inflexible in a crisis that would turn out to be an irremediable disaster weighing against them irrevocably in eternity. Those malignant Jews, the Pharisees who defied our Lord, were never to be loosed from the sin which they banded together to perpetrate. They would be left to die in it, without forgiveness either in this world or in the next. In this world, Rome itself would crush them as a race; and in the next world, the torture apportioned to Dives in hell would be extended to them all.

No sin against the Holy Ghost could be as black as theirs. Christ's miraculous work, the driving out of devils, was itself a work of the Holy Spirit residing in our Lord and operating with and through him. To spurn him whom the demons had visibly obeyed and to ascribe the exorcisms to the devil himself was tremendous blasphemy that shut out and turned away from themselves the flow of God's mercy. As long as they lived, however, they could have repented. So could Judas have done. They preferred, however, not to break with their iniquitous disposition. As Christ foresaw and foretold, they lurched defiantly into eternal despair.

And down the ages they have imitators, the "children of unbelief" whom St. Paul so designates when writing to the Ephesians. The anger of God is their everlasting portion (cf. Eph. 2:2; 5:6).

Article 4

Can One Sin against the Holy Ghost before Sinning in Any Other Way?

The Angelic Doctor indicates that very often a sin against the Holy Ghost presupposes other sins. It is when "the wicked man reaches the depths of sin" (Prv. 18:3) that contempt grows upon him. It can happen, however, that a sin against the Holy Ghost may precede all others. A diabolical temptation could bring it about, especially in a person who is violently impelled toward evil without the restraint of a strong inclination to be good. St. Thomas envisages the case of one who has never knowingly sinned, but whose aversion for repentance is so pronounced that he resolutely determines never to practice it. The rank and file of perfect men, so esteemed, could not congeal so suddenly. It would only be by gradual decline through other sins, that they would eventually lapse into a sin against God's Holy Spirit.

Here and there, however, Cajetan explains how exceptional unfortunates take to the downgrade. Certain penitents who, after confession and contrition, revert to their former experiences of despair, unbelief, and unbridled lusts, easily lapse into contempt of the Holy Ghost. They are dominated by a disposition that overpowers them. It grows out of the disfigurement and deformity lasting over, in them, as the result of their earlier criminality.

QUESTION FIFTEEN

Blindness and Dullness of Mind

Introduction

Mental blindness and dullness are two vices opposed to the spiritual gift of undersanding, in the same way that voluntary ignorance is opposed to the gift of knowledge. Ignorance is a topic pertaining to the general cause of sin. No treatise on the gifts of the Holy Ghost is complete, independently of the obstruction caused by this double handicap and the sins that follow from it, namely, mental blindness

and dullness. We here submit three heads: (1) on blindness of mind; (2) on dullness of mind; (3) how both result from carnal sin.

Article 1

Is Blindness of Mind a Sin?

Statement of the question. Spiritual blindness should rather pass as an excuse for sin. Is it not a penalty rather than a sin in itself? How can mental blindness be a voluntary condition?

The Angelic Doctor answers: Blindness of mind is a sin. St. Gregory the Great classifies it among the vices that spring from lust.

Its theological character is expressed in a simple word: it is a blindness that is voluntary. But how is it to be discerned? St. Thomas points the way. Blindness of mind, as here considered, is a complete privation of knowledge about divine things. It is a privation that has been chosen either directly or indirectly. It amounts to a refusal to consider the things that have to do with salvation. Such blindness cannot escape being a sin.

For a man to turn away willfully and directly from considering the mystery of salvation is affected ignorance. It is to maliciously repudiate understanding, lest one should otherwise act right (cf. Ps. 35:4). A more frequent sin is committed indirectly by withdrawing attention from salvation, in order to bestow it on other incompatible things more loved in this world. This is the trail of false philosophy. But God does not cease to be merely because his existence is humanly denied or methodically ignored. In the end, all men are to be judged at his tribunal, false philosophers included (cf. Jn. 16:8).

Article 2

Is Dullness of Sense or Intellectual Obtuseness the Same as Spiritual Blindness?

These handicaps may seem to be of the same kind, differing only in degree; but dullness of mind is a special sin that is not to be identified with mental blindness. St. Gregory long ago ascribed dullness to gluttony and blindness to lust.

Theological Analysis: Dullness of understanding betrays a weakening of the mind in its appreciation of spiritual benefits. Dull is the opposite of sharp. What is sharp penetrates. An eagle's sight is, for that reason, said to be sharp. But a dull instrument, an obtuse agent, are disqualified to pierce. They may crush, they do not penetrate. In our premises, mental dullness goes hand in hand with carnal affection. The weakness is voluntary. Spiritual things are not missed; they are shunted. A kind of stupidity invades the soul without resistance. Benumbing self-indulgence is a sin, yet it is not so grievous as spiritual blindness, which shuts out of the mind the very perception or thought of spiritual truth. The physical parallel of blindness, as opposed to myopia or short-sightedness, is obvious. In being opposed to the infused gift of understanding, both these sins are hindrances to contemplation. St. Joseph may be proposed as an incomparable illustration of what St. Thomas means by saying that a person endowed with the gift of understanding is able to penetrate revealed mysteries with great subtlety, dispensing with the need of discursiveness or theological reasoning.

Article 3

What is the Origin of Mental Blindness and Dullness of Sense?

Adhering to St. Thomas, we accept St. Gregory's explanation. Spiritual blindness springs from lust. Intellectual obtuseness results from gluttony.

Both gluttony and lust submerge the intentions of men in corporeal things. This effect pulls the mind out of and away from intellectual horizons. The taste for intellectual pursuits is weakened. It dries up and the misfortune is all the more rapid when gluttony courts favor with lust. Venereal delights, in or out of the married state, exceed in vehemence the sociabilities of intemperate banqueting. Hence, the mental or spiritual blindness that ensues from lust is a far worse dis-temper than the dullness of sense that is begotten of gluttony. The contrary virtues of abstinence from food and drink, maturing in chastity, contribute, on the other hand, to improvement in spiritual sight and growth in the infused gift of contemplation.

The article on which we are dwelling excites no more notice in par-

ticular theological circles than many mountain caves do to tourist mountain climbers. Certain caves, nevertheless open into priceless mines. Rare gems have been left scattered or stowed away in them from antiquity. So it has been with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Too bad that abridged treatises on them have been so commonly devaluated and are so devaluating in practical theology. The gifts of the Holy Ghost are inestimable gems, even when buried away in the heaps of casuistic, theological quartz. Moral theology is bereaved of its greatest refinement when it is utterly divorced, in all its concepts, from the gift of contemplation and regard for the impediments thereto. It is of the highest importance, not only to aim at obliterating vice, but to restore supernatural balance. Sins of the flesh are bad enough in hindering contemplation; they do worse by dragging souls farther beyond themselves, and accordingly farther away from all spiritual understanding.¹ Sound spiritual direction cannot afford to ignore or to minimize the disastrous reality.

The doctrine of Aquinas is not far removed from the piety of the *Imitation of Christ*. If contemplatives are few, it is because of the fewness of those who dedicate themselves to perfect self-denial as prescribed by our Lord in the words: "If a man wishes truly to follow me, let him deny himself and carry his cross daily." Contemplation as an infused condition of soul is impossible, as St. John of the Cross shows at great length, without an utter purification from inordinate passions that must be not only active and zealous, but passive and self-immolating. What man must begin or prepare for, is an infusion that God alone can effect and complete.

QUESTION SIXTEEN

The Precepts of Faith, Knowledge, and Understanding

Introduction

In conformity with scholastic usage the term "precept" must not be understood in the restricted sense of an order binding under penalty of mortal sin. Both here and in the treatment of other virtues, it will

¹ Cf. *Summa theol.*, IIa IIae, q. 15, a. 3.

express the sense of an imperative, as differentiated from mere counsel, whether binding under pain of mortal sin or only venial sin. This design of Cajetan we adopt as our own. We cannot be reconciled with the less reflecting moderns who have claimed that St. Thomas regards every precept as binding under pain of mortal sin, and who have therewith denied that any distinction exists between venial sin and a mere imperfection. This cannot be. He who lies breaks a precept; but not to the extent of committing a mortal sin every time. The precept does not inculcate such severity. Our subject matter justifies two articles. Both articles apply directly to the Old Law, prior to the New.

Article 1

In the Old Law, Should There Have Been Given Any Precepts to Believe?

With faith in one only God, there were no other precepts bearing on faith imposed in the Old Law. In so stating, St. Thomas explains there were no other precepts bearing on more intimate or secret mysteries.

1. St. Paul gives the basis for this position by telling the Romans (cf. Rom. 3:27) that the Old Law was one of observances thereby differing from the law of faith.

2. Theologically, the mysteries of faith, under the Old Law, did not demand to be expounded to the people. It sufficed if they formally obeyed God as their supreme legislator. This they had to do: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Dt. 6:4). Wrapped up in this blanketing truth were the precepts of the Decalogue regulating religious observance and the cultivation of the other virtues.

The New Law is differentiated from the Old on this very score. There are many commandments of faith, for which our Lord demanded that a way be made in the absolute imperative: "You believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn. 14:1). The root of the new commands was faith in the Incarnation. All Christians are obliged by this precept, under pain of mortal sin, to believe expressly in the Incarnation and the sum total of all truths allied with it. They are summed up (1) in the Apostles' Creed; (2) they embrace the Ten Commandments and the precepts of the Church; (3) they hinge on the prescribed use of the Lord's Prayer; (4) they require the reception of at least three sacraments, namely, baptism, Holy Eucharist, and penance.

The obligation to believe binds from the first instant of moral reason's awakening. It extends to all truths of faith, provided they have been sufficiently proposed. Its purpose is to regulate human life and make it acceptable to God as the author of salvation. The exercise of faith requires express acts which are to be repeated over and over. An act of faith must be elicited, especially on feasts of major solemnity. Two propositions were condemned by Pope Clement XI for obvious reasons: 1) "One single act of faith suffices for life." 2) "To have once believed in the mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation is enough." Over and above festal occasions, there is an obligation that binds us to make an act of faith according to circumstances; as when some other duty cannot be carried out without it—repenting from sin for instance, receiving a sacrament worthily, reciting prayers of hope, charity, or other acts of religion, resisting temptations, especially temptations against faith itself.

Article 2

Was There Any Suitability in Formulating Precepts of Knowledge and Understanding in the Old Law?

Aquinas maintains there was, and for three reasons. The Angelic Doctor expresses a clear view of what constituted the use made of these infused gifts by the just in the Old Law. He resumes the features preserved in Deuteronomy, Chapters 4 and 6.

1. The standing of the elect race as "a great nation" among surrounding peoples would be established by their example in accepting from their own God knowledge, understanding, doctrine, and discipline: "Behold a wise and understanding people" (Dt. 4:6). The underlying support was God-love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart . . . soul . . . strength," and "these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart and thou shalt tell them to thy children" (Dt. 6:5-7).

2. The serious-mindedness of the Israelites was to be anchored in spiritual knowledge and understanding secured by the observance of a distinctive precept: "Thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising" (Dt. 6:7).

3. No risk was allowed of forgetting: "Thou shalt bind them as a

sign on thy hand. Thou shalt carry them dangling between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them [for a motto] in the entry and on the doors of thy home." It was a sort of supernatural contemplation of divine things that was thus encouraged, though not imposed. "Forget not the words that thy eyes have seen. Let them not slip out of thy heart all the days of thy life" (Dt. 4:9).

A number of similar subordinate precepts could be collected from the Old Testament. The moral axis was furnished in the Book of Sirach: "In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin" (Sir. 7:40). Priests were the ordinary instructors, even of the king (cf. Dt. 17:16-20). The recommendation to be meditative as the hour approached for sleep and to keep recollected in God's law had this advantage for Aquinas: it would cause better dreams, in the sense of improved phantasms when falling off to sleep.

The embryonic piety thus sketched in the Old Law blossomed into more abundant fruitage that cannot be missed in the Gospel code and apostolic prescriptions of the New Law.

The impact of St. Thomas's reasoning on the precepts fashioned to make the primitive faith of Israel active, through an obedience that would keep its spirit unimpaired—thanks to the gifts of knowledge and understanding—is of salutary moment for comprehending Christians. The Angelic Doctor points out luminous applications. Every Christian should meditate on the law of God and on the mysteries of salvation, being impelled thereto by the gifts of knowledge and understanding, as with the force of precepts that produce a far greater perfection than mere faith can attain to without them. Spiritual knowledge and understanding must evaluate all created things as vanity, save such as are necessary for salvation or are employed advantageously to promote it. This employment is quite different from the mere toeing of a mark, or the mechanical attainment or winning of grades or degrees. Personal industry herein is accessory to docile acquiescence to the interior guidance furnished by God the Holy Ghost. It is a divine program that thus works out. It was explained by Our Lord himself through the imagery of sowing seed and harvesting, which are parabolically alike in the natural and supernatural orders: "I speak (to the multitudes) in parables: because seeing they see not, hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . The heart of this people has grown gross. . . . With their ears they are dull of hearing and their eyes they have shut. . . . But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they

hear. . . . Hear, therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and understand it not, the wicked one comes, catches, and carries away what has been sown in his heart. . . . But he who receives the seed upon good ground is he who hears God's word, understands it, and bears fruit" (Mt. 13:13-23).

The apostolic outpouring of St. Paul in his epistle to the Colossians was invigorated by the Master's theme: "We cease not to pray for you and we beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of (God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing . . . increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10). There is no progress in charity where faith is devoid of the infused gifts of knowledge and understanding apportioned to match it.

Conclusion to the Tract on Faith

Here ends the treatise on faith. The one thing that must always be remembered is its supernatural essence, its essentially supernatural character. In its substance, Christian faith has to be supernatural by reason of its double formal object, *quo* and *quod*. This double formal object determines its species and both these elements and phases are essentially supernatural.

The formal object *quod* is Prime Truth in its intimate essence, namely, the very life of the Blessed Trinity. The formal object *quo*, or the motive for believing, is Prime Truth actually revealing itself, not as the philosophical author of nature or a historical miracle worker, but as the author of supernatural grace in all workings.

Through supernatural faith, its possessor, dismissing all discursiveness, clings immediately with his intellect to the divine Revealer and to all that he reveals. He so acts because of the unique exclusiveness of the indivisible formal motive. He believes God and in God by the same simple act. So long as God is reached mediately—around a corner, so to speak—it can only be accounted for by an inferior motive, the formal impact of which is to introduce some foreign species and create a mixture that can no longer be identified with the simple habit and theological virtue of infused faith.

The nature of the theological virtue as "the substance of things to be hoped for" and the very "beginning of life eternal" is fundamental doc-

trine, demanding to be protected and defended as the "apple of one's eye."

All the cherished praises of faith spring lineally from the appreciation engendered by defining faith through its double formal object, *quo* and *quod*. Thence issue all the properties inherent in faith, the principal ones being emphasized through comparisons. These bear on the certitude of faith and liberty in believing.

Absolutely speaking, the certainty of faith surpasses that of all natural cognition. No scientific proof is comparable to it. Its formal basis is uncreated Truth, infallible and essentially supernatural. It is divine by participation.

The act of faith is free, both with regard to its existence or exercise and with regard to its specification. The object believed in is not evident. Of itself, it does not compel the believer to assent. All momentum in that direction comes, and must come, from the pious movement of the will.

At this point we pass on to the second and third theological virtues, hope and charity.



INDEX

- Act of faith, 156-258
- Adam, faith in Christ, 218
- Allegiance to apostates, 457
- Angels: faith of, 119, 316-22; intelligence of, 61
- Apostasy, 400, 456 f.
- Apostate rulers, 457
- Apostates: in Canon Law, 429 f.; excommunication of, 415; Gregory VII on, 457
- Apostles: faith of, 145; knowledge of, 147
- Arcana Dei*, 118
- Articles of faith, 48, 149-53
 - Council of Trent on, 150 f.
 - deduced from others, 124
 - definition of, 123 f.
 - distinction of, 123
 - and natural religion, 123 f.
 - number of, 149-53
- Asceticism, 43 f.
- Assent: and act of faith, 80, 156; St. Augustine on, 157
- Athanasian Creed and faith, 47
- Augustine, St.: on assent, 157; on heretics, 415; on Incarnation, 213 f., 216
- Baptism: of desire, 233; of Jews, 419 ff.; of unbelievers, 419 ff.
- Beatific vision, 88, 100
- Beatitudes and theological virtue, 38 f.
- Bellevue, Abbe de, on infused virtue, 13 f.
- Benedict XIV (pope), on private revelation, 81 f.
- Bernadette, St., prophetic light of, 82
- Billot (cardinal), on certitude of faith, 68; on infused virtues, 7 and note; on motive of faith, 53
- Billuart (cardinal), on private revelation, 82 f.
- Blasphemy, 400, 458-68
 - of the damned, 460
 - definition of, 458
 - examples of, 458
 - habit of, 459
 - against the Holy Ghost, 460-65
 - malice of, 459
 - sin of, 459
- Blessed, faith of, 331
- Books, heretical, 456
- Bossuet (bishop), *Panegyric of St. Joseph*, 149 and note
- Cajetan: on revelation, 66; on theological virtues, 12
- Cardinal virtues, 44
- Caritanism, 247
- Catechism of the Council of Trent, 150 f.
- Catholic Church, history of, 337 f.
- Catholicism, as state religion, 249 f.
- Causality, reciprocal, 72
- Censures, kinds of, 426, 435 ff.
- Certitude
 - and faith, 67 ff.
 - of faith, 298-315
 - historical, 80
 - metaphysical, 305
 - supernatural, 80
 - of theology, 312
- Charity: Abbé de Bellevue on, 13 f.; and faith, 164 f., 274-77, 295 ff.; and moral virtue, 31 ff.; perfection of, 20-23; Salmenticensis on, 8
- Children: infused faith in, 81; motives of credibility, 81
- Christ: Adam's faith in, 218; explicit faith in, 217-41; Savior of all men, 217-41
- Clement XI (pope), condemnation of Quesnel, 14
- Cognition, human, 60
- Communication with unbelievers, 416 f.
- Communion, spiritual, 233
- Confession of faith: meaning of, 245; obligation of, 253, 257 f.; and salvation, 244-59
- Conscience, 44; and faith, 47
- Contemplation: and faith, 266; infused, 88; motions of, 147; St. John of the Cross on, 389
- Controversy with unbelievers, 412
- Converts: to Catholicism, 338; to Protestantism, 338
- Credibility: evidences of, 103-7; and miracles, 94; motives of, 81, 92

Damned, blasphemy of, 460
 Death penalty: for heretics, 448 ff.; lawfulness of, 450 ff.
 Decalogue, faith in, 241 f.
 Definition, nature of, 158
 Degrees of faith, 342-47
 Demons, faith of, 12, 63, 322-31
 Deposit of faith, 81 f.
 Deposition of apostates, 457
 Development of faith: methods of, 135 f.; St. Gregory the Great on, 126; Vatican Council I on, 133 f.
 Dissimulation and simulation, 256
 Dogma, development of, 90
 Duration of virtues, 34

Effects of faith, 364-68
 Efficient cause of faith, 347-64
 Epicurism, 251 f.
 Equality of infused virtues, 34 f.
 Erroneous propositions, 89 f.
 Excommunication: of apostates, 415; of heretics, 455
 External act of faith, 244-59
 Eucharist and infused virtues, 34

Faith

and accidental error, 96 f.
 of angels, 119
 of the apostles, 145
 articles of, 48, 121-30, 149-53
 assent of, 80
 and Athanasian Creed, 47
 and beatific vision, 88
 Billot on motives, 53
 of the blessed, 331
 and certitude, 67 ff.
 certitude of, 298-315
 and charity, 274-77, 295 ff.
 in Christ, 217-41
 compatible with evidence, 116 ff.
 complexity of object, 84 ff.
 confession of, 253
 and conscience, 47
 contemplative, 266
 and Council of Trent, 47 f.
 and creeds, 48
 in the decalogue, 241 f.
 definition of, 99
 degrees of, 342-47
 and demons, 12
 of demons, 63, 322-31
 denial of, 248 f.
 deposit of, 81 f.
 development of, 125 f., 136, 133 ff.

Faith (*continued*)

not discursive, 71
 divine, 47
 and divine truth, 48
 and dogmatic formulas, 88
 effects of, 364-68
 efficient cause of, 347-64
 as "evidence," 261 f.
 explicit, 197 ff.; 209 ff.; 221 ff.
 extent of, 87 f.
 falsity in, 90 ff.
 and fear of the Lord, 364 f.
 as fidelity, 47
 first two truths, 127
 formal motive of, 61 ff.
 formal object of, 48
 formed, 282
 free act, 101
 freedom of, 313 f.
 of heretics, 63, 331-42
 human, 47, 101
 implicit, 219
 in the Incarnation, 213 f.
 an indivisible act, 69
 infused in children, 81
 and infused contemplation, 88
 infused by God, 348-60
 infused *per se*, 52
 and intellect, 268 ff.
 interior act of, 81
 Jansenists on, 279
 of Jonas, 117
 and justification, 191 f.
 and knowledge, 109-21
 lifeless, 361 f.
 light of, 106 ff.
 living, 274 ff.
 loss of, 443 f.
 Luther on, 279
 and magistracy of the Church, 92 f.
 of Mary, 117
 material object of, 48, 57 f.
 merit of, 165-74
 and mortal sin, 278-82
 object of, 46 ff.; 51-61
 obscurity of, 108
 of patriarchs, 132
 Pius IX on, 388
 precept of, 242 f.; 468 ff.
 and predestination, 118 f.
 primacy of, 293 f.
 primary object of, 86
 and Prime Truth, 51 f.
 and Priscillianists, 90 f.
 of prophets, 116 ff.
 proposition against, 426 f.

Faith (*continued*)

- Protestants on, 22, 47, 98, 242
 - Protestant definition, 268
 - and purification of the heart, 366 ff.
 - and reason, 58, 91
 - and salvation, 81
 - and science, 195 f.
 - Scotus on motives of, 52
 - secondary object of, 86
 - senses of, 46 f.
 - simplicity of object, 84 ff.
 - sins against, 253
 - of souls in purgatory, 331
 - of St. Thomas, 102
 - as "substance," 261 f., 292
 - supernatural, 70
 - in the supernatural, 189 f.
 - symbols of, 153 f.
 - table on virtue of, 45 f.
 - and tradition, 49
 - in the Trinity, 241 ff.
 - as trust, 47
 - unformed, 284 ff.
 - and veracity, 62
 - virtue of, 259-72
 - and works, 279
- Faith, act of, 156-258
- and assent, 156
 - and charity, 164 f.
 - definition of, 181
 - external, 244-59
 - frequency of, 242 f.
 - interior, 156-244
 - necessary for salvation, 185-89
 - obligation of, 242 f.
 - simplicity of, 163 f.
 - Suarez on, 164
- False religion, simulation of, 255
- Falsity: in the believer, 92; in faith, 90 ff.
- Fear of God, 364 ff.
- Fideism, 247
- Fidelity as faith, 47
- Formal object: kinds of, 55 f.; of virtues, vii-x
- Freedom of religion and *Syllabus*, 250
- Froschammer and simirationalism, 59
- Fruits of the Holy Ghost, 39 f.
- Gift of knowledge, 392-99
- Gift of understanding, 368-92
- Gifts of the Holy Ghost
- grading of, 38
 - in the intellect, 37
 - necessary for salvation, 37
 - remains in heaven, 38

Gifts of the Holy Ghost (*continued*)

- and theological virtues, 35 ff.
 - in the will, 37
- God: formal object of faith, 58; kingdom of, 58, 61; as Prime Truth, 57 ff.
- Golden mean and moral virtues, 30
- Graces: and certitude, 108; *gratis datae*, 283 f.
- Gregory the Great, St.: on development of faith, 126; on unbelief, 402
- Gregory VII (pope), on apostates, 457
- Heresy, 423-56
- cause of, 425
 - clerics suspected of, 415 f.
 - definition of, 423 f.
 - degrees of, 435 ff.
 - and doubt, 434
 - formal, 425 f.
 - grades of, 426 f.
 - indirect, 432
 - interior, 435
 - private, 430 f.
 - and theological conclusions, 426
- Heretical propositions, 89 f.
- Heretics
- association with, 256
 - books by, 456
 - Canon Law on, 429 f.
 - death penalty for, 448 ff.
 - denied Christian burial, 455
 - denied sacraments, 455
 - excommunication of, 415
 - execution of, 447 ff.
 - faith of, 63, 331-42
 - imprisonment of, 451
 - John Hus on, 447
 - Luther on, 447
 - reconciliation of, 454 f.
 - relapsed, 455
 - and Scriptures, 337
 - St. Augustine on, 415
 - St. Jerome on, 446
 - Syllabus* on, 447
 - toleration of, 446-54
- Hermes, errors of, 302
- History of the Catholic Church, 337 f.
- Holy Ghost: blasphemy against, 460-65; gifts of, xvi; sins against, 460-65
- Hus, John, on heretics, 447
- Ignorance, invincible, 439
- Immortale Dei* (encyclical), 250
- Incarnation, belief in, 213 f., 219
- Indifferentism, 452 f.; condemned, 192
- Infallibility of the Church, 72

- Infidels: communication with, 256; salvation of, 236 ff.
 Innocent IX (pope), on assent of faith, 105, 302
 Innocent XI (pope), condemnation of laxism, 242 f., 406

 Jansenists on faith, 279
 Jerome, St., on heretics, 446
 Jews, baptism of, 419 ff.
 Joan of Arc, St., revelation of, 81
 John, St., contemplation of, 147
 John the Baptist, St., faith of, 132
 John of the Cross, St., on contemplation, 266, 389, 399; *The Dark Night of the Soul*, 121
 John of God, St., on purification of the soul, 19 f.
 John of St. Thomas, on infused knowledge, 147
 Jonas, faith of, 117
 Joseph, St., faith of, 148 f.; mission of, 149
 Justice, divine, and mercy, 118 f.
 Justification: and faith, 191 f.; Council of Trent on, 18 f.

 Kingdom of God, 58, 61
 Knowledge: degrees of, 398; and faith, 109-21; precept of, 470-2
 Knowledge, gift of, 392-99
 and compunction, 397 f.
 and faith, 395
 and human science, 395 f.
 practical, 396 f.
 speculative, 396 f.

 Lamennais, liberalism of, 192
 Lateran, Fourth Council of, on salvation, 403
 Laxism: condemnation of, 242; condemned by Innocent XI, 242 f., 406
 Lazarus, enlightenment of, 117
 Leo XIII (pope): condemns modernists, 250; and heretics, 337; *Providentissimus Deus*, 357 and note; *Quam pluries*, 148
 Liberalism condemned, 192, 250, 452 f.
 Lifeless faith, 361 ff.
 Luther, Martin: on faith, 279; on heretics, 447

 Martyrdom, obligation of, 247 f.
 Mary: faith of, 321; illumination of, 117
 Material object of faith, 55 ff.

 Mental blindness, 465 f.
 Mercy, divine, and justice, 118 f.
 Merit of faith, 165-74
 Miracles: and credibility, 94; modernists on, 105
 Modernists: on assent of faith, 300; condemnation of, 134, 205, 250; on miracles, 105
 Molinism on supernatural faith, 7, 353
 Mortal sin: and faith, 278-82; and gift of understanding, 381 ff.
 Mourners and gift of knowledge, 397 f.
 Mysteries: and created intelligence, 59; and extrinsic evidence, 106; natural, 61

 Necessity: of precept, 185 f., 232 f.; medial, 185 f., 232 f.; sacramental, 233
 Noncontradiction, principle of, 130
 Number of articles of faith, 149-53

 Opportunism, 251 f.

Pascendi (encyclical), and modernism, 205, 250
 Patriarchs, faith of, 132
 Paul, St. (apostle), contemplation of, 147
 Pelagianism and infused virtues, xviii
 Pelagius on assent of faith, 348
 Penalties, temporal, in Canon Law, 414
 Persecution, flight from, 257
 Piety, gift of, 37
 Pius IX (pope)
 on Catholicism as state religion, 249 f.
 on certitude of faith, 388
 condemns indifferentism, 192, 453
 condemns liberalism, 192
 on mysteries of faith, 99 f.
 Syllabus of, 332 f.
 Pius X, St. (pope), condemns modernists, 134, 250, 300
 Pope and symbols of faith, 154 f.
 Predestination and faith, 118 f.
 Prime credibles, 127 ff., 144
 Prime truth, 57 ff.
 Principles: Billuart on, 80; metaphysical, 80
 Priscillianists: and denial of faith, 249; and lying, 90 f.
 Private revelations, 430 f.
 Prophecy: degrees of, 131; and private revelation, 82 f.; and revelation, 106
 Prophets, faith of, 116 ff.

- Protestantism and unbelief, 403
 Protestants: on Catholic faith, 71; definition of faith, 268; faith of, 98, 242; on faith, 32, 147
Providentissimus Deus (encyclical) of Leo XIII, 337 and note
 Prudence: and moral virtue, 31 f.; and theological virtues, 25
 Purgatory, faith of souls in, 331
- Quam pluries* (encyclical) of Leo XIII, 148
 Quesnel, condemnation by Clement XI, 14
- Reconciliation of heretics, 454 f.
 Religion, virtue of, 14 f.
 Repression of unbelievers, 414
 Revelation
 Cajetan on, 66
 certitude of, 80
 direct, 89
 formal, 58
 prior to Church, 72
 private, 81, 430 f.
 and prophecy, 83, 106
 of St. Joan of Arc
 virtual, 58, 89
 Ripalda on God's truthfulness, 91
- Salmanicenses: on acquired charity, 8; on private revelations, 82
 Salvation
 and act of faith, 185-89
 and confession of faith, 244-59
 and faith, 81
 of infidels, 236 ff.
 outside the Church, 192 f., 403
 of pagans, 205
 Scheeben on certitude of faith, 69
 Schismatics: Canon law on, 429 f.; excommunication of, 415
 Science and faith, 116, 195 f.
 Scotus: on infused faith, 5, 7; on motives of faith, 52; on supernatural faith, 352 f.
 Scriptures, heretics on, 337
 Semi-Pelagians on assent of faith, 348
 Semirationalists and Vatican Council I, 58
 Simulation: and dissimulation, 255; and false religion, 253
 Sins: against faith, 253; against the Holy Ghost, 460-65
 Socrates, salvation of, 205
- Suarez: on act of faith, 164; on equality of things, 291; on faith and knowledge, 110
 Subordination of created things, 290 ff.
 Supernatural, faith in, 189 ff.
Syllabus of Pius IX, 332 f.; on freedom of religion, 249 f.; on heretics, 447
 Symbols of faith, 153 f.
- Table of virtues, 24
 Teresa, St.: infused ideas, 102; on purification of the soul, 19; vision of, 100
 Tertullian: on martyrdom, 248 and note; on persecution, 250
 Theological conclusions, 137, 124 f.
 Theological virtues
 number of, 12 ff.
 precedence of, 17-25
 and prudence, 25
 Scotus on, 5, 7
 simultaneous infusion, 23
 Theology, certitude of, 312
 Thomas, St. (apostle), profession of faith, 102
 Toleration: of heretics, 446-54; of unbelievers, 419
 Tradition and faith, 49
 Transubstantiation as revelation, 58
 Trent, Council of
 on absolution of sinners, 18 f.
 on articles of faith, 14
 on charity, 14
 on enforcing the faith, 414
 and faith, 47 f.
 on faith of heretics, 332
 on faith and mortal sin, 165
 on jurisdiction of the Church, 413
 on infused faith, 352
 on infused virtues, 4 f.
 on supernatural faith, 191
 Trinity, the, faith in, 241 ff.
 Truth: definition of, 56; divine, 48; division of, 56; ontological, 56 f.; transcendental, 56 f.
- Unbelief, 400-23
 grades of, 411
 negative, 404 f.
 and Protestantism, 403
 a sin, 408
 St. Gregory on, 402
 Unbelievers
 baptism of, 419 f.
 communication with, 416 f.
 controversy with, 412
 repression of, 414

Unbelievers (*continued*)

toleration of, 419 ff.

works of, 409

Understanding, gift of, 368-92

degrees of, 387 f.

and faith, 387-92

and mortal sin, 381 ff.

practical, 376

and sixth beatitude, 384 f.

speculative, 376

and trials of the soul, 380

Understanding, precept of, 470-2

Union of churches, 247

Vatican Council I

on certitude of faith, 301

on credibility, 103

definition of faith, 99

on development of faith, 133 f.

on doubting faith, 407, 438

on faith, 57 f.

on faith and reason, 58, 91

on infused faith, 352

on miracles, 103

on motives of faith, 61 ff.

and semirationalists, 58 f.

Veracity and faith, 62

Vice, definition of, xi ff.

Virtues

acquired, xiv

acquired moral, 26 ff.

cardinal, 44

definition of, xi ff.

division of, xiv ff.

duration of, 34

equality of, 34 f.

and the Eucharist, 34

formal object of, vii-x

and golden mean, 30

increase of, 34

infused, xv f.

infused moral, 26 ff.

number of, 43

specification of, xvi ff.

and the will, 9 ff.

Virtue of faith, 259-472

Virtues, theological, 3, 35 ff., 50

Visions of St. Teresa, 100

William of Occam on good and evil, 91

Works: and faith, 279; of unbelievers, 409